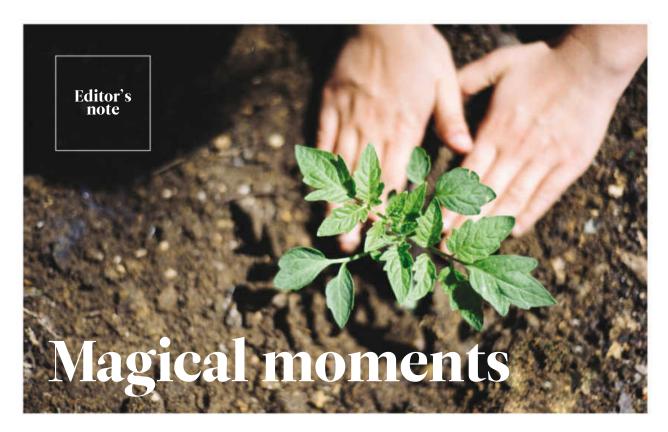




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IT'S EASY TO FORGET WHAT TRIGGERED A PARTICULAR INTEREST, especially as the years tick along. One of my passions is gardening, but I've been at it for so long that I can't recall specifically what started my love of plants.

I suspect seeds were the gateway. Like it is for many of us, witnessing tiny black specks metamorphose into plump poppies or radishes for the first time was a magic show, and I wanted to see it again and again. Maybe a bean growing in a Dixie cup with my name on it sitting on a windowsill in elementary school had something to do with it, too, and I have a teacher to thank.

Much later, when I was home with young children, economical seeds helped fill empty spaces in our new garden. Each January, I sent off carefully considered seed orders; early spring was the time to fire up the fluorescent lights hanging over an old dining table in the basement, start germinating my newly buried treasures and wait for the frost to disappear.

But as my interest in gardening gained momentum, more "exotic" plants beckoned: Hellebores! Tropical vines! Hard-to-find trees! You know how it goes. Avid gardeners can easily flit from genus to genus, much like honeybees relishing nectar in a field of clover. The indoor-growing paraphernalia was packed up, and visits to specialty plant nurseries took the place of thumbing through seed catalogues at the kitchen table. As the seasons came and went, I opened fewer and fewer seed packets.

This past winter, when I was contemplating new garden plants, I recalled last year's lacklustre tomato harvest. In a hurry, I had grabbed a few random plants at a garden centre and got them into the ground much later than they would have liked. I then remembered the husky transplants I used to start myself-in varieties we liked best-and realized how much I missed (and was missing out on) not growing from seed. (To read about a few of this year's tempting seed choices, see "The Good Seed" on page 20.)

Now, waiting on my counter are fresh packets for 'Big Beef', 'Chocolate Pear' and 'Fox Cherry' (of course) tomatoes, along with seeds for carrots, lettuce and peppers. I like tall flowers for bouquets, and there's more to choose from if you grow your own; flats at nurseries hold much shorter varieties. I'm excited about the waist-high, deep red 'Cinnabar' marigold and 'Celway Terracotta' celosia, along with a rainbow of clary sages in the pile, too.

Let the magic begin.





Beckie Fox, Editor-in-Chief







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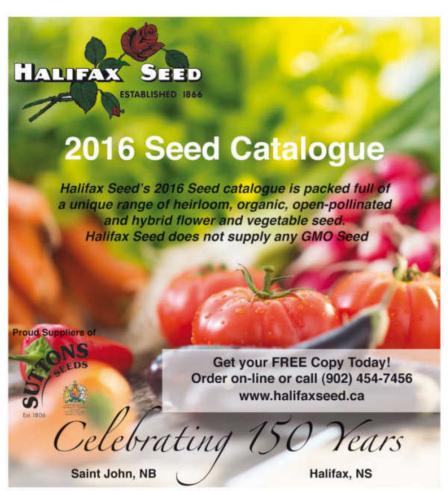
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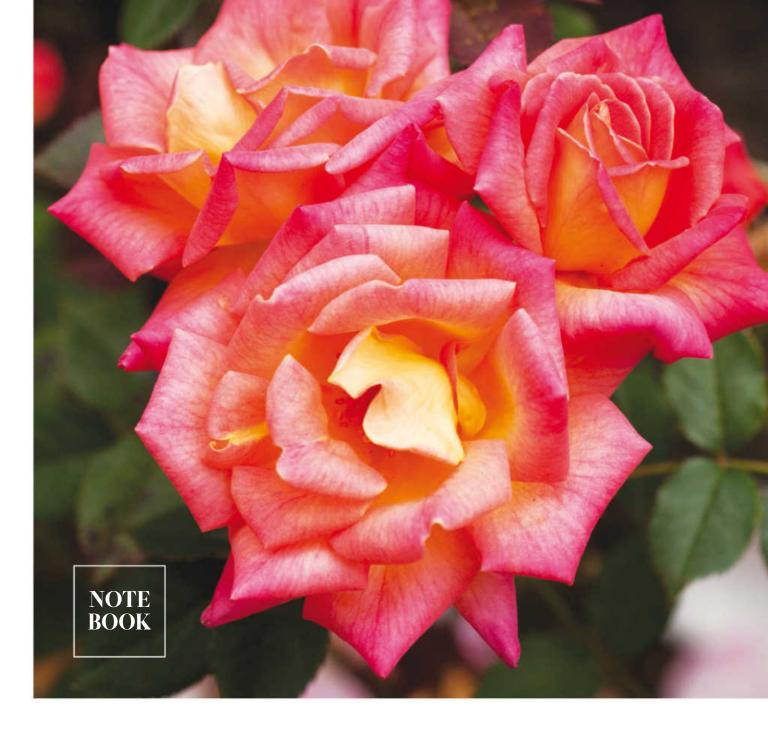








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Simply irresistible

Rose lovers short on space need not give up growing these beauties. Instead, try miniature roses. These dainty plants have all the qualities of their larger siblings, but on a smaller scale. They're also easy to grow and hardy, and their dwarf habit makes them versatile enough for not only in-ground growing, but containers as well; some varieties are even scented, too. \bullet

'Hot Tamale' miniature rose lives up to its name with a luscious blend of hot pink, yellow and orange on its frilly petals.

NOTE BOOK

IRRESISTIBLE MINIATURE ROSES

CONTINUED



Planting

Whether you're growing miniatures in pots or in the ground. roses do best with a minimum of four hours of sun daily, and well-aerated, moisture-retentive soil. I add several handfuls of compost or perlite to my rose soil. To encourage repeat blooming, deadhead regularly. For pot culture, make sure the container you choose has drainage holes and is large enough for the fullsized plant (roses hate having their roots disturbed). Climbing miniatures require half-barrelsized pots; all others need pots that hold at least 1.7 gallons (8 L).

Watering

Watering requirements depend on temperature, hours of

sunlight, wind and soil, but here are recommentaions for container-grown and in-ground miniatures.

'Jeanne Lajoie'

Container: Water potted roses daily (or every other day) at the height of summer until water comes out the drainage holes.

In ground: Water when the first two inches (5 cm) of soil dries out. Watering deeply slightly less often is preferable to more frequent, shallow watering.

Fertilizing

Fertilize in spring when all winter protection is removed.

Container: Potted plants respond well to a balanced slowrelease fertilizer (follow package directions) or a weekly dose of fish fertilizer.

In-ground: Feed garden plants a mild dose of fish fertilizer every couple of weeks and augment with a light top dressing of granular rose food monthly.

Overwintering

Their delicate appearance aside, miniature roses can withstand light freezing, but like protection once the temperature gets to -10°C for more than a week.

Container: Move potted miniatures into an unheated garage or cold basement for the winter. "It doesn't need to be light, but it shouldn't be completely dark either," says David Wilson, owner of The Heather Farm & Classic Miniature Roses in Sardis, B.C. "Wrap the pot in fabric or a blanket and water the plants a few times during the winter. They should stay on the drier side, but the soil shouldn't completely dry out and harden either."

In-ground: Miniature roses in the garden can be treated one of two ways. Wilson says you can prune the plant back by one-third or a little more in the fall before mounding four to six inches (10 to 15 cm) of soil around the rose base followed by a lighter material like sawdust or leaf mulch until the plant is completely covered. This allows in moisture and enables air to circulate during the winter. Wilson also says he knows gardeners who dig up the entire rose plant, lay it in a trench, cover it with soil and bury it for the winter.

- Laura Langston

Minimizing miniature rose problems

Mildew and blackspot can sometimes be a problem for miniature roses.

- To avoid mildew, provide good air circulation and avoid watering during humid weather.
- To discourage blackspot, consider applying a fungicide during warm, humid weather (ideal blackspot conditions); if the plant is afflicted, remove infected stems and leaves from both the plant and surrounding soil immediately. Do not compost. Aphids love roses. I
- Aphids love roses. I squish small colonies by hand and spray larger infestations with a mild dish soap solution (not on sunny days).



Six favourites

The following roses are all favourites for different reasons. Some get my vote for strong scent (Scentsational and Corinne's Choice) or unusual colour (Sandalwood and Rainbow's End) while others are my pick for perfect form (Mountie) or reliability ('Jeanne Lajoie'). Sizes given are for in-ground plants. Container-grown miniatures may be smaller, depending on the size of the pot.

Corinne's Choice: Pure white blooms with a lovely scent; disease resistant. Height: 18 to 24 inches (45 to 60 cm).

Jeanne Lajoie': Reliable, disease-resistant climber with scented double-pink blooms. Height: 6 to 8 feet or more (1.8 to 2.4 m) in the ground, considerably shorter in pots. My container-grown specimen grows about three feet (90 cm), is shrublike and doesn't need staking.

Mountie: Double red blooms with very slight fragrance; high disease resistance; Ontario-bred. Height: 12 to 20 inches (30 to 50 cm).

Rainbow's End: Striking blooms that are deep yellow, blushing to orange-red, unscented; prone to blackspot, but shade tolerant and prolific. Height: 12 to 21.5 inches (30 to 55 cm).

Sandalwood: Striking terracotta blooms with a spicy scent. Temperamental, but the gorgeous flowers are worth it. Height: 12 to 14 inches (30 to 35 cm).

Scentsational: Large lavender-pink blooms with a strong scent. Height: 24 to 30 inches (60 to 75 cm).

FOR SOURCES, SEE PAGE 61.



GARDENS OF CANADA



LOOK FOR A NEW TULIP GARDEN NEAR YOU

This spring, 140 communities across Canada will enjoy new displays of colourful red and white tulip blooms

Known as the Dutch-Canadian Friendship Tulip Gardens, the 140 new tulip beds were planted last fall by local groups to commemorate the 70th anniversary of the first gift of tulips sent by the Netherlands to the people of Canada in 1945.



The initiative is a collaboration of the Canadian Garden Council, Vesey's Bulbs, Canada Post, the Canadian Tulip Festival, the Canadian Nursery Landscape Association and the National Capital Commission. Find a 70th Anniversary Dutch-Canadian Friendship Tulip Garden near you: www.canadasgardenroute.ca

WORLD TULIP SUMMIT COMING TO OTTAWA IN 2017



The World Tulip Summit Society (WTSS) will be hosted in fall 2017 by the Canadian Tulip Festival in Ottawa, to mark the 15th anniversary of the first modern World Tulip Summit as well as the 150th anniversary of Canada.

The WTSS came into being in 2002, in Ottawa. It's a revival of the Great Tulip Conference of the Royal National Tulip Society, last held in London, England, in 1897. Representing many of the world's leading tulip festivals, events and attractions, the 2002 summit was attended by delegates from seven countries. The WTSS now involves 17 countries and has met at summits in Australia, U.K., U.S., Turkey and South Korea.

The WTSS is headquartered in Ottawa and chaired by Michel Gauthier, the man of a thousand tulip ties and the Executive Director of the Canadian Garden Council.

To become a member of the WTSS or attend the 2017 World Tulip Summit, visit worldtulipsummit.net





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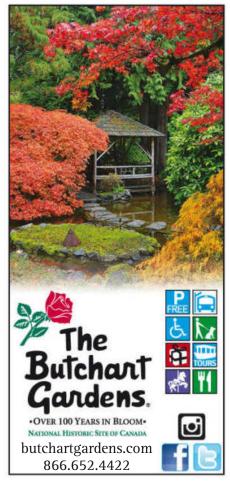
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Celebrate Garden Days by visiting an activity or event near you. You'll find lots to choose from at www.gardendays.ca

PROCLAIM GARDEN DAY IN YOUR COMMUNITY

The Canadian Garden Council invites you to ask your mayor or local politicians to procleaim Friday, June 17, 2016, as Garden Day in your town, city or municipality. To make this process even simpler, download the Proclamation Template, which you can find by clicking on the "Your City's Official Garden Day" button at www.gardendays.ca

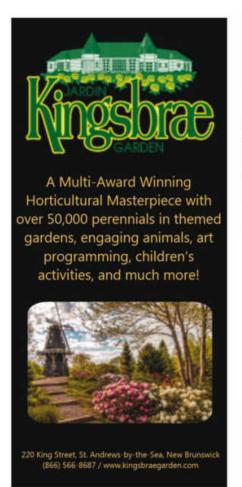


CANADA'S ANNUAL CELEBRATION OF GARDENS AND GARDENING

June 17 to 19, the Friday, Saturday and Sunday of Father's Day weekend, are the dates for Garden Days 2016, the country's annual celebration of gardens and gardening.

If you, your garden organization or garden centre is planning an event in June 2016, consider holding it during Garden Days and benefit from the vibrant public relations and social media campaigns that support this program.

All you need to do is register your activity, at no charge, on the www.gardendays.ca website.



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FIND A GARDEN TO VISIT ON CANADA'S GARDEN ROUTE



Garden tourism is a significant sector of Canada's vast tourism offerings and being part of Canada's Garden Route will ensure that your garden experience has high-profile visibility for all visitors, whether they come from around the corner or across the world.

■ If you have a garden-related experience to promote that you'd like to list on the website in time for the upcoming garden-visiting season, contact marketing@gardencouncil.ca

MAKE GARDENS PART OF CANADA'S 150TH

■ Canada will celebrate its 150th birthday in 2017 and the Canadian Garden Council encourages you to ensure that gardens are part of the celebration in your community.

The Council would like to know how your community plans to celebrate 2017 with gardens. If you have any thoughts about how gardens could be integrated into the country's 150th anniversary celebrations, send them to: director@gardencouncil.ca

About the Canadian Garden Council

The Canadian Garden Council is a national umbrella body for the country's garden organizations. Its purpose is to champion the sector's contributions to the well-being of Canadians; the sustainability of our communities; and to promote the joys and benefits of gardens, gardening, urban and municipal landscapes and green infrastructure.

Membership in the council is open to individuals, like you; garden experiences; garden and horticultural associations, clubs and organizations; national, provincial and regional tourism and other industry organizations; and institutions and corporations.

Visit www.gardencouncil.ca for more information.

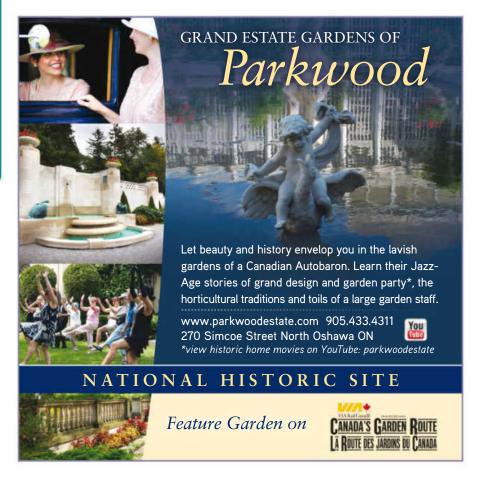
The easy-to-navigate www.canadasgardenroute.ca website makes finding gardens and garden experiences of all types as simple as the click of a button.



The gardens of Niagara Parks, where beauty blooms.









NOTE **BOOK**

Many clubs, businesses and associations especially those that have been around for decades—are reinventing themselves to stay relevant in today's world of rapidly changing communication technologies and evolving population demographics.

Among them are local horticultural societies, sometimes perceived as gatherings of experts in botany or "little old ladies with white gloves," says Dianne Westlake of Peterborough, Ont. A member of horticultural societies for 24 years, Dianne is also a district director in the Ontario Horticultural Association, the umbrella group for more than 280 societies in the province. Dianne and her husband, Gary, himself a member for more than 15 years, are quick to say that efforts by several societies are effectively dispelling these myths with new programs and initiatives.

"Horticultural societies are different from plant societies that bring aficionados of a particular plant together, where they can discuss the minutiae of their passion with like-minded people," says Julia Goulden, president of the New Westminster Horticultural Society in British Columbia. "Hort societies are an eclectic group of home gardeners brought together because they live in a particular city or area and love gardening."

"The scope for growth in gardening is huge, and societies need to find ways to tap into this," says Gary. One way to stay relevant is to be an advocate of environmental issues and sustainability, not just focus on home gardening, he adds.

Taking on local beautification projects is a big part of today's societies, Dianne notes, pointing out that their group conducts plant sales and other fundraising efforts to help support these community projects.

"Horticultural societies give back to the community through hundreds of volunteers and funds for projects that might not be funded by municipalities," Julia says.

The format for horticultural meetings is changing, too. Meetings are less formal, and more entertaining and educational, say the Westlakes. They're a social time "where gardeners can come together and make connections with other gardeners," Dianne says. Youth programs—some connected to local schools—are on the rise, and with more focus on growing food.

At the Dartmouth Horticultural Society in Nova Scotia, there is a bigger push at marketing through social media as a way to attract more members. "We tell people you don't need to be a botanist to belong," says Debbie Symonds, past president. "I personally prefer to use 'garden club,' because it isn't as intimidating and doesn't imply that we're all horticulturists." The group also offers "Gaggle of Gardeners" shopping trips via bus that stop at different nurseries and garden centres as a way to keep current members engaged and attract potentially new ones. "We go to different areas of the province each trip—everyone has a great time," says Debbie. "Seatmates end up sharing their gardening knowledge with each other." She adds that the Dartmouth group also has a mentoring program that benefits new gardeners, and makes their older members feel valued.

To find a horticultural society in your community, go to icangarden.com/clubs. cfm, which has contacts for most of the provincial groups. —Beckie Fox

BOOK REVIEW

Happy Hens & Fresh Eggs: Keeping Chickens in the Kitchen Garden, With 100 Recipes By Signe Langford; photographs

by Donna Griffith

Douglas & McIntyre; \$22.95

Backyard hen-keepers—current or aspirational—will find plenty of practical advice about caring for an urban flock in this new book, which tells the personal story of Signe Langford's long-time love of raising and caring for chickens in her Toronto garden. A food writer and professional cook, she also includes her favourite egg recipes.

Keeping chickens in a garden has its challenges, and Langford suggests ways to keep hens away from tasty, newly planted seedlings. "I suppose some hardhearted Hannahs might lock up their ladies while they garden, but I couldn't bear it," she writes. "Gardening is about a million times more fun with my crew of helpers. And yes, there will be collateral damage as they gobble up benevolent earthworms, but they will also wolf down every nasty grub, slug and potato bug you uncover."

—В. F.



THE DRAW OF GREAT DIXTER

For some fortunate gardeners, the experience of a lifetime can be the opportunity to make a pilgrimage to one of the estates in England that has influenced garden design over the past century.

One favourite destination is Great Dixter in East Sussex, England, with its lush borders and topiary, bold use of colour, and long history as the home of legendary garden designer and writer Christopher Lloyd (1921–2006).

Unlike the fate of many grand estates that decline or disappear when their owner is gone, Great Dixter's position in the gardening firmament has remained secure, thanks to Fergus Garrett, chief executive officer and head gardener, and the Great Dixter Charitable Trust. Garrett, hand-picked by Lloyd to ensure the garden remained relevant and dynamic, came to Dixter in 1992.

Great Dixter is open not only for visits, but also for the chance to study and work there. Attendees come from all over the world to get practical, hands-on experience working in the garden beside the charismatic and energetic Garrett and his staff. This emphasis on teaching—whether it's instructing

horticultural students or avid home gardeners who attend one of the symposia to learn best practices and soak up design inspiration—is what helps set Dixter apart.

Of the four week-long symposia for gardeners scheduled this year, all but one in September is fully booked. For the past 18 years, the program has given participants the opportunity to practise traditional maintenance techniques in the famous borders, discuss aspects of design and tour nearby gardens.

"Every minute was a learning experience—soil preparation, propagation methods,

succession planting, staking and pruning all came to life," says Donna Tweedell of Hamilton, Ont., describing the symposium she attended in 2007. "I went to learn more about an Arts and Crafts-inspired garden and came away with much more." For information about the symposia, contact office@greatdixter.co.uk.

Formal scholarships are available to U.K. and U.S. horticultural students, and there are also placements for trainee gardeners from around the world. For information about student placements, contact education@greatdixter.co.uk.

-Beckie Fox







Clockwise from top left: Topiary punctuates one of Great Dixter's long borders; upright purple lupins, spheres of allium and a spiky golden grass; one of the displays of containers designed by students that appear throughout the garden.



GROWING FOR POLLINATORS

When you're deciding what plants to add to your garden this year, consider including those that will be especially beneficial to pollinators. The National Pollinator Garden Network—a group of U.S. gardening clubs and garden-related non-profit associations and industries—suggests growing the following annuals, perennials and herbs, all of which can be started from seed.

PLANTS:	ATTRACTS:
Milkweed (Asclepias spp.)	Monarchs, bumblebees, swallowtails
Cilantro (Coriandrum sativum)	Honeybees, syrphid flies, parasitic wasps, tachinid flies
Cosmos (Cosmos spp.)	Lacewings, pirate bugs
Coneflower (Echinacea spp.)	Many types of pollinators
Sunflower (Helianthus spp.)	Several types of bees, wasps, beetles, flies
Sweet alyssum (Lobularia spp.)	Syrphid flies, several types of bees
Bee balm (Monarda spp.)	Bumblebees, honeybees, butterflies
Oregano (Origanum spp.)	Honeybees, flies
Black-eyed Susan (<i>Rudbeckia</i> spp.)	Many types of pollinators
Zinnia (Zinnia spp.)	Bumblebees, butterflies



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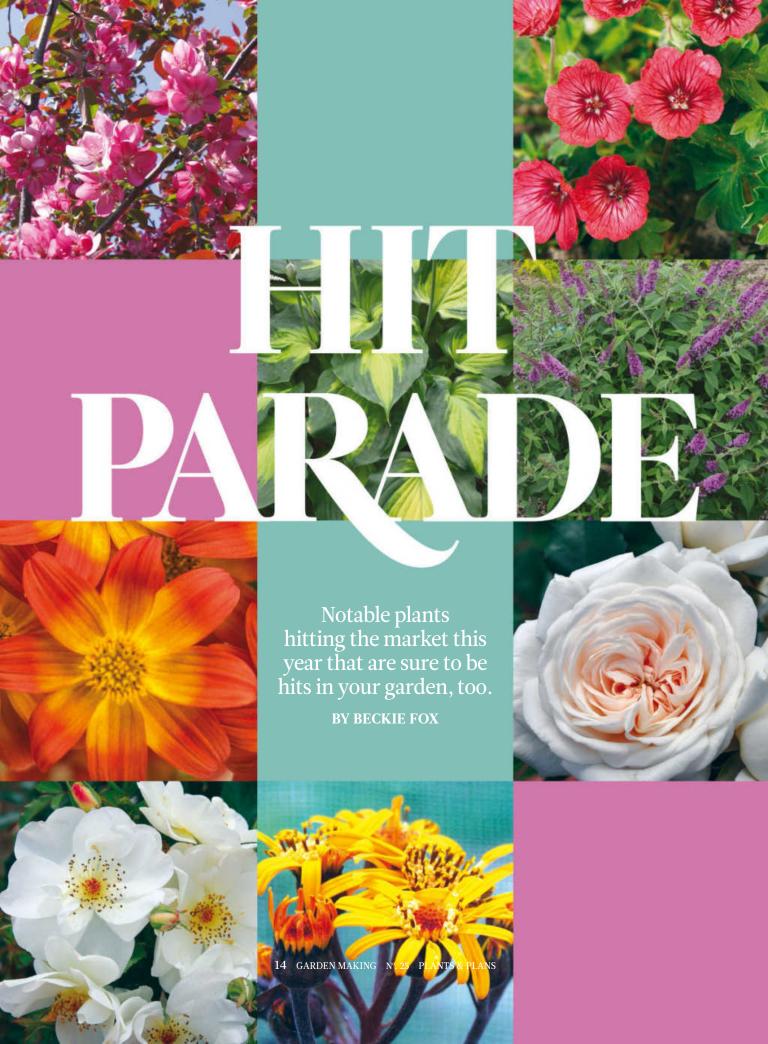
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We asked those in the gardening-know—Canadian plant retailers, wholesalers, growers and breeders—to tell us which new plants they're most excited to be offering to gardeners this spring. Start making your lists.

PERENNIALS

'Pocahontas' anemone

(Anemone Fantasy Series 'Pocahontas')

A new addition to the Fantasy Series of dwarf Japanese anemones. "Many of the regular lapanese anemones are too tall and aggressive for gardens, so these less aggressive, compact varieties are extremely useful," says Larry Davidson of Lost Horizons in Acton, Ont. Thick, double, bubble gum-pink petals are surrounded by a central boss of golden-yellow stamens. Grows to 16 inches (40 cm); Zone 5.

Mighty Chocolate (Astilbe Mighty Chocolate Cherry)

the season progresses.



Zone 5. **Iridescent Bells** bellflower (Campanula 'Iribella')

compact, rounded habit

with pale shades of blue

black seed pods. Grows

to lavender blooms

followed by attractive

to 26 inches (66 cm);

A repeat-flowering variety that blooms from June through September. Plants are covered with deep purple buds that mature to silvery-white blooms flushed with pale purple. Grows 24 inches (60 cm) tall; Zone 5.

'Rainbow Marcella' coneflower (Echinacea Butterfly 'Rainbow Marcella')

Plants produce loads of orange sherbet flowers that age to raspberry pink; blooms from midsummer to frost. A compact 18 inches (45 cm) tall; Zone 4.

Jolly Jewel Series cranesbills (Geranium cinereum Jolly Jewel Series)

Iridescent Bells bellflower

The Jolly Jewel Series offers five vibrant colours: pink, lavenderpink, magenta, magenta-red and salmon (a new colour for this genus). "These cute, low-growing cranesbills are perfect for the front of the border and edging pathways," says Gary Lewis of Phoenix



Velvety red flower spikes reach four feet (120 cm), while the foliage changes from green to chocolate brown to dark red as Zone 3.

'Pixie Periwinkle' false indiao (Baptisia australis

'Pixie Periwinkle')

False indigos are long-lived plants with attractive foliage. flowers and seed pods, but are too large for many gardens. 'Pixie Periwinkle' has a



PERENNIALS CONTINUED

Perennials in Richmond, B.C. Flowers appear all summer long atop dissected, bluish-green foliage. Grows to 10 inches (25 cm); Zone 4.

'Angel Falls' hosta (Hosta 'Angel Falls')

A cascading form with round, light green leaves edged with a darker green; a variegated sport of 'Niagara Falls'. Plants have lavender blooms and are slug resistant. Reaches 16 inches (40 cm) tall; Zone 4.

'Beyond Glory' hosta (*H.* 'Beyond Glory')

A sport of 'Old Glory' with a three-inch (8-cm)-wide border of dark green surrounding a light green centre.
Pale lavender blooms adorn 16-inch (40-cm)-tall plants; Zone 4.

'White Gold' bleeding heart (Lamprocapnos spectabilis 'White Gold', syn. Dicentra spectabilis)

Lacy, gold to electricgreen foliage emerges in early spring, followed by pure white, heart-shaped flowers that arch over the leaves. "Ever since the pink-flowered 'Gold Heart' came out, I've been waiting for this innovation," says Gary Lewis of Phoenix Perennials in Richmond, B.C. Plants are 24 inches (60 cm) tall; Zone 5.

'Real Charmer' Shasta daisy (Leucanthemum 'Real Charmer')

A summer-blooming perennial with large, decorative blooms with fancy fringed central petals. Flower colour is cream to lemon. Grows to 22 inches (56 cm) tall; Zone 5.

'King Kong' ligularia (Ligularia dentata 'King Kong')

An extra-large form of 'Britt-Marie Crawford' with leaves growing to 16 inches (40 cm) across on plants three to four feet (90 to 120 cm) tall and wide. Leaves emerge shiny black-purple in spring, mellowing to burgundy-purple by summer, when the orange-yellow daisy flowers are produced in clusters above the foliage. Zone 5.

'Little Angel' burnet (Sanguisorba 'Little Angel')

Small notched leaves edged in white are topped with striking heads of strawberry red, dense catkin-like blooms. Grows 26 inches (66 cm) tall; Zone 5.





'Lime Twister' sedum (*Sedum* SunSparkler 'Lime Twister')

A variegated sport of 'Lime Zinger' with pink flowers in late summer. Good in containers. Grows seven inches (18 cm) tall; Zone 4.



SHRUBS & TREES

'Ruby Slippers' **Amur maple** (Acer tataricum ssp. ginnala 'Ruby Slippers')

With a mature size of 20 feet (6 m) tall by 15 feet (4.5 m) wide, this tree is ideal for small gardens. 'Ruby Slippers' has a straighter trunk than other Amur maples, and bright red samaras (keys) in early summer and blazing red fall foliage. Zone 3.

'Purple Ghost' Japanese maple (A. palmatum 'Purple Ghost')

Ruffled leaves are iridescent purple in spring, changing to purple in summer and red in autumn. Grows eight feet (2.5 m) tall; Zone 5.

'Orchid Annie' **butterfly bush** (Buddleia 'Orchid Annie')

A compact shrub that grows to only two or three feet (60 to 90 cm) with eight-inch (20-cm)-long orchidpurple flower panicles loved by butterflies. Blooms earlier than other butterfly bushes. Zone 5.



'Snow Tower' flowering dogwood (Cornus kousa 'Snow Tower')

"The narrow, columnar

growth of 'Snow Tower' makes it ideal for smaller gardens where a vertical accent is needed," says Darren Heimbecker of Whistling Gardens in Wilsonville, Ont. Features include multicoloured bark, new reddish growth in spring, purple foliage in fall and white flowers when most spring trees have already finished. Grows eight feet

(2.5 m) tall; Zone 5.



'Red Dragon' corkscrew hazel (Corylus avellana 'Red Dragon')

New growth stays red longer into the season than its predecessor 'Red Majestic'. Spiraling stems and burgundy catkins

offer winter interest. Resistant to eastern filbert blight. Grows eight feet (2.5 m) tall; Zone 4.

Yuki Cherry Blossom deutzia (Deutzia × 'NCDX2')

A low cascading shrub with masses of whiteand-pink flowers in spring and burgundy foliage in fall. Good container plant; deer resistant, too. Grows 18 inches (45 cm) tall; Zone 5.

'Ena-nishiki' variegated disanthus (Disanthus cercidifolius 'Ena-nishiki')

"Few shrubs can provide the spectacular fall colour of this plant," says Darren Heimbecker of Whistling Gardens in Wilsonville, Ont. This rare cultivar has creamy-white-andgreen variegated heart-shaped leaves. Grows six feet (1.8 m) tall; Zone 5.

SHRUBS & TREES CONTINUED

'Mariken' dwarf ginkgo (Ginkgo biloba 'Mariken')

This compact, bushy selection was discovered in 1995 as a witches'-broom growing in a ginkgo tree in the Netherlands. It has the same fanshaped green leaves as a regular ginkgo, and turns bright yellow in fall. "But 'Mariken' stays very small, and its thick, spreading branches are loaded with a dense arrangement of foliage," says Dave Dunn of Rideau Woodland Ramble in Merrickville, Ont. Just 24 inches (60 cm) tall; Zone 4.

Miss Saori hydrangea (Hydrangea 'H20-2')

This Plant of the Year winner at the 2014 Chelsea Garden Show produces exquisite mopheads of double florets that are white with rose-pink picotee edges. The flowers are produced on both old and new wood from June until frost in regions with mild winters; in Zone 5, blooms appear on new wood in summer. Foliage emerges

burgundy-red in spring, turns to green as it matures, then back to burgundy-red in late summer and fall. Compact, at three feet (90 cm) tall.

Royal Mist Rosybloom crabapple (Malus ×adstringens '|efmist')

An upright crabapple with a dense canopy resulting from a cross between 'Shaughnessy Cohen' and 'Thunderchild'. Deep pink flowers and purple foliage in spring, with leaves turning bronzegreen in summer. Height is 20 feet (6 m); Zone 2.

Bylands dwarf blue spruce (*Picea pungens* 'ByJohn')

Intense blue foliage on a compact, mounded conifer, two to three feet (60 to 90 cm) tall and wide. "It's an easy plant to grow that doesn't have any major insect or disease problems, is deer and rabbit resistant and is just stunningly beautiful," says Donna Chandler of the Green Spot in Brandon, Man. Zone 2.



Royal Mist Rosybloom crabapple

Klondike Amur cherry (Prunus maackii '|efdike')

Klondike retains the best traits of Amur cherry (exfoliating golden bark and black knot resistance) while possessing improvements in crown form, growth rate and winter hardiness. Shows off white flowers

in spring. Grows 25 feet (8 m) tall; Zone 2.

'Joe Kozey' Japanese umbrella pine (Sciadopitys verticillata 'Joe Kozey')

A narrow form of Japanese umbrella pine with sturdy branches held tightly to its trunk, enabling it to withstand snow loads better than other types. Slow growing—six inches (15 cm) per year—but will eventually reach 25 feet (7.5 m) tall; Zone 5.

ROSES

Oscar Peterson rose

Its large semi-double flowers with a light fragrance are creamcoloured in bud, opening to pure white with a centre of yellow stamens. Repeat bloomer and disease resistant. Three feet (90 cm) tall; Zone 3.



Honeymoon rose Reblooming low climber with 80 ivory petals with soft apricot centres. Grows eight feet (2.5 m) tall; Zone 5.



ANNUALS

FOR SEED-PROPAGATED ANNUALS, SEE "THE GOOD SEED" ON PAGE 20.

Monarch Promise milkweed (Asclepias Monarch

Promise)

A cultivar of milkweed with white-and-green variegated foliage and vivid orange-red flowers. Attractive to monarch butterflies, too. Grows 24 to 30 inches (60 to 75 cm) tall.



Campfire Fireburst bidens (Bidens Campfire Fireburst)

Bicolour flowers in rich orange and yellownot the usual yellowon compact, spreading plants. Grows to 24 inches (60 cm) wide, 10 inches (25 cm) tall.

Superbells Holy Moly calibrachoa (Calibrachoa Superbells Holy Moly)

An eye-catching star pattern of deep rose and yellow blotches on each bloom. Spreads to 18 inches (45 cm); six inches (15 cm) tall.

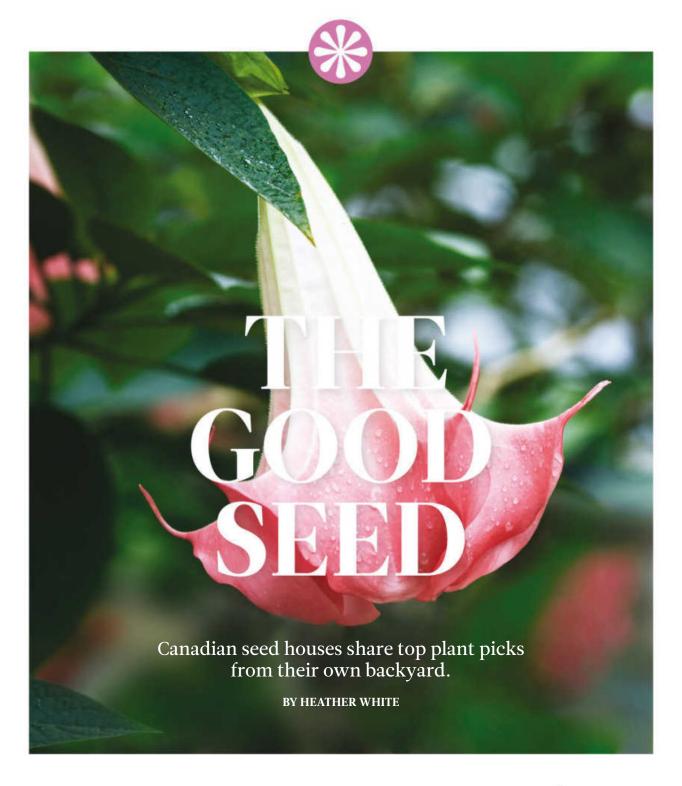
'Black and Bloom' anise-scented sage (Salvia guaranitica 'Black and Bloom')

Has thicker leaves, larger blooms and darker stems than its precursor, 'Black and Blue'. Rich violet-blue flowers on 36-inch (90-cm)-tall plants.



FOR SOURCES, SEE PAGE 61.





We recently contacted several Canadian seed houses to hear about their new or novel offerings—the following are 24 of their favourites. Trends range from plants for pollination to white veggies and piquant peppers. In some cases, old varieties are coming back into mainstream circulation. Now, where did you put that seed money?

Brugmansia with single pink, trumpet-shaped blooms, grown from seed.

Anything Grows, Stratford, Ont.

Rick Weingarden is excited about these two plants for very different reasons. 'Phoenix' nasturtium is a unique split-petal climbing variety reintroduced from the early 20th century; its non-stop edible petals look like flames, or fish tails. Then there's 'Iron Lady' tomato, a determinate cultivar notable for its resistance to early blight, late blight and septoria leaf spot.

Florabunda Seeds, **Indian River, Ont.**

Dirk Berghout has his grandfather's seed company ledgers dating from 1896, so he has an idea of what was popular in the past (at least in the Netherlands). Not that he needs themgardeners tend to ask for plants that evoke memories of yesteryear, he says. Florabunda has seeds for finely cut, silvery-white 'Silverdust' dusty miller; it's a good foil for other plants and is a good edger. Brugmansia is also popular, with single white, single pink and double purple trumpet-shaped blooms. Bring brugmansia indoors as houseplants in fall, says Berghout.

Halifax Seed, Halifax, N.S., and Saint John, N.B.

This is the only Canadian company selling varieties under the banner "P. Allen Smith's Home Grown Seed Collection" (P. Allen Smith has been variously dubbed "Arkansas' Answer to Martha Stewart" and "The Martha Stewart of the South")—which is to say the seeds have P. Allen Smith's seal of approval. Emily Tregunno is enthusiastic about 'Sweet Treats' cherry tomato (large size with a globe shape and deep pink hue), 'Sweet Hearts' grape tomato (produces early and continues throughout the season with impressive yields), 'Lilliput' melon (a personalsize miniature melon with an intense flavour) and 'Imperial Green' spinach (good bolt tolerance and mildew resistance).

Stokes Seeds. Thorold, Ont.

Sales of vegetable seeds have outnumbered ornamentals for the past 15 to 20 years, says Wayne Gale. Notable this year? 'Blanco', a bright white, personal-size pumpkin that's resistant to both powdery mildew and colour change due to sun or light frost. Keeping with the white theme, Stokes also has a new squash called 'Mashed Potato'. And for the gardener who wants to hear the sound of music of a meadow nearby—plus feed bees—there's a new collection of some 19 varieties of annuals and perennials, aptly called Bee Feed Mix.



'Artwork' broccolini



Red shiso



'Silverdust' dusty miller



'Iron Lady' tomato

FOR SOURCES, SEE PAGE 61.

Urban Harvest, Toronto, Ont.

In the hot pepper department, Colette Murphy offers 'Bulgarian Carrot' (not to be confused with a Bugs Bunny-style carrot, although it looks like one); 'Golden Nugget', considered an ornamental and edible, too; and 'Trinidad Scorpion', which is hot, hot, hot. Murphy is also excited about 'Tolosa' black bean-traditionally on offer at a weekly market in Tolosa, Spain. It's a small, roundish pole bean that's buttery and fine-skinned when cooked.

Veseys, York, P.E.I.

Angus Mellish of Veseys is also president of All-America Selections (Canada is well represented—Connie Dam-Byl of William Dam Seeds is vice-president), an independent non-profit organization that tests new varieties in trial grounds throughout North America annually, introducing the best garden performers as AAS Winners. Two he notes in particular are a white beet called 'Avalanche' (exceptionally sweet with a mild flavour) and 'Artwork' broccolini (produces attractive, tender side shoots and is bolt tolerant). He's also a fan of 'Zinderella Peach' zinnia, which has double flowers in shades of salmon to light orange, and hits their stride in late summer.

West Coast Seeds, Ladner, B.C.

Picking up on the kale craze, Mark Macdonald recommends a mix called Storm—the first multi-species, multi-seed pellet for salads, he says. The plants have a variety of textures and colours in a mounded, columnar form and are best suited for containers. Other highlights: San Marzano Lampadina indeterminate tomato—it's the original heirloom, imported from Italy, and does well here, Macdonald says—and red shiso, a frilly-edged, deep purple herb used in Southeast Asian cuisine.

William Dam Seeds. **Dundas, Ont.**

Allowing broccoli to flower gives bees a month of food, says Connie Dam-Byl, but if you want to plant ornamentals specifically for pollinators, she suggests three options: Calamintha nepeta 'Marvelette Blue', with a compact form, sweet mint scent and purple-blue flowers from early summer through to fall; Gaillardia pulchella, an annual that loves hot, dry conditions; and Persicaria orientalis 'Cerise Pearls', a short, more floriferous relation of a favourite cottage garden annual called kiss-me-over-the-garden-gate (P. maculosa).

PLANTING WITHA PURPOSE

Well-chosen, well-placed plants are a valuable design tool. Here's how to use them effectively.

BY KAREN YORK



Plants fill our gardens with rich, sensual appeal, but with a little forethought by the savvy gardener, they can do even more. Used as a valuable design tool, they can work as outdoor architecture, including walls and privacy screens, ceilings (tree canopies) and floors (groundcovers). Plants can enhance the architecture of your house, whether formal or informal, urban or rustic, modern or vintage. With their own looks and personalities, plants can be used to create whatever mood or atmosphere you desire, from meditative and serene to sunny and playful. They can anchor a space, punctuate it or define it; create vistas, focal points and backdrops; and draw attention away from ugly intrusions. On a more down-to-earth note, they can mitigate problems such as annoying traffic noise and soil erosion on slopes. Truly multi-tasking marvels! Here are some ideas of how to make the most of plants' designing ways.



Instantly brighten shady areas by using variegated plants—foliage splashed or striped with yellow, white or silver looks like dappled sunlight. Thankfully, there's a good selection of tough, shade-tolerant perennials that will do the trick, from silvery Japanese painted fern, dead nettles, lungworts, Siberian bugloss and ginger to sedges, grasses, trilliums, Solomon's seal and, of course, hostas in every variation of gold, green and white.

Japanese painted ferns and variegated hostas, including 'Brim Cup', 'Great Expectations' and 'Abiqua Moonbeam', light up the space beneath a big European larch. Luminous little flowers are a welcome bonus.

Photo: Perry Mastrovito/Gap



A single splendid specimen plant can be as strong a focal point as any gushing fountain or serene goddess. The key is careful placement—at the centre of a garden, at the end of a path or perfectly framed like the glorious full moon maple shown here. To ensure the specimen is the undisputed centre of attention, any companion plants must play supporting roles, simply there to make the star look good.

In informal settings, plants in serried rows look too rigid. And one plant here and another plant there creates an equally undesirable polka dot effect. Think of the weaver's art and create a colourful tapestry by planting in drifts—irregular bands of plants carefully interwoven and melding softly along their edges. For inspiration, check out the gardens of Dutch plantsman Piet Oudolf, a master of drifts with all-season appeal.

Drifts of white daisies, pink phlox, rusty helenium, yellow lilies and orange rudbeckia (in foreground) are distinct colourful threads in the overall effect. The plants' varying heights add further layers of interest.

Photo: Yvonne Duivenvoorden for Garden Making





Set up a pleasing and unifying rhythm by repeating a plant (or colour) at intervals through the garden. A useful design tool, repetition draws the eye along and brings coherence to even wildly mixed plantings. A repeated plant doesn't have to be the identical species or cultivar, as long as there's a visual resemblance. Yellow is popular for colour repetition, because it stands out and plant options abound, but any colour will work.



The bright chartreuse heads of various euphorbias create a rhythmic colour repetition that knits together the disparate elements in this mixed border in Victoria. Purple alliums echo the roundness of the euphorbias and also tie in colourwise with the purple smoke bush beyond. Photo: Alan Mandel/Gap



Diversity is definitely good, but sometimes the power of one trumps it. A mass planting of a single type of plant has instant impact and can invest a design with elegant simplicity. Avoid the plain and boring, however, and choose a plant that has intrinsic interest on its own, from texture, colour and/or form. Such singular plantings lend themselves well to linear patterns and geometric shapes (think circles, triangles and squares).

Variegated hostas in single file complement and accentuate a small, ornate fence that might otherwise get lost in the landscape in a Toronto front garden. The lush leaves also serve to soften the edges of the pathway pavers.

Photo: Edward Pond for Garden Making





Paths, patios, walls and structures of concrete, stone and metal offer a rigid geometry that's vital to any garden. But hardscaping is just that: hard. Soften it with plants, enough to blur the edges without obscuring the feature—flowing grasses lining entryway steps, thymes creeping among pavers or a delicate rose twining up a wall, for instance. The happy pairing of hard with soft heightens the effect of both.

Low-growing hostas and golden Japanese forest grass (Hakonechloa macra 'Aureola') offer textural contrast to large steps in a Toronto urban garden, yet are tidy enough not to overflow their bounds and create a trip hazard.

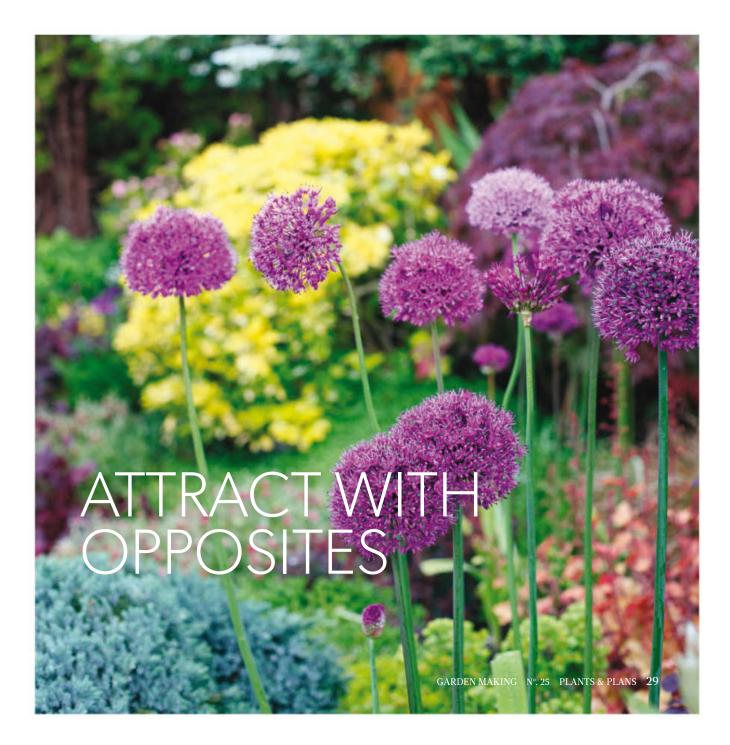
Photo: Roger Yip for Garden Making

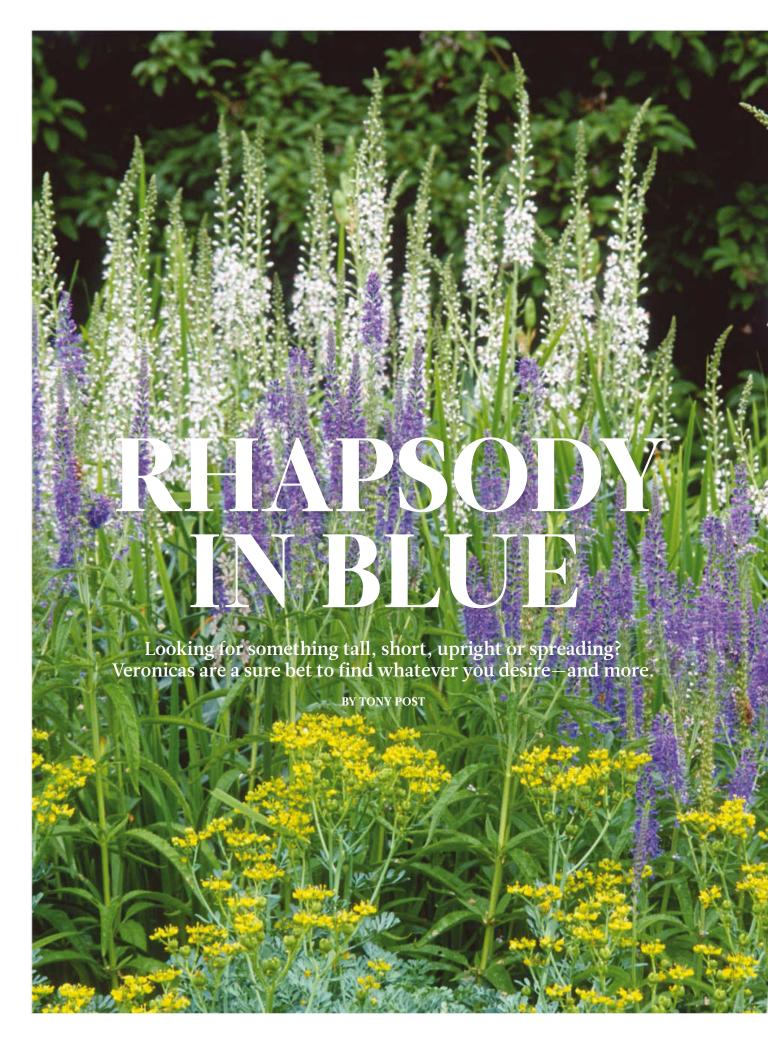
Pastels are pretty, but for the zippiest colour combos, pick complementary hues—namely, those that are opposite each other on the colour wheel: yellow and purple; red and green; blue and orange. Plants with colourful foliage can fill the bill (purple and yellow barberries, for example) or form a backdrop for transient displays of bulbs and perennials, or longer-lasting ones featuring annuals. Guaranteed to energize your landscape.

'Purple Sensation' alliums pop against the glowing foliage of golden Mexican orange (*Choisya ternata* Sundance) in a B.C. garden, which also features the dynamic duo of purple coral bells set amid golden creeping Jenny.

Photo: Janis Nicolay for Garden Making











MAYBE IT'S THEIR BLUER THAN blue flowers or their dramatic vertical bloom that first grabs your attention. Then they continue to delight you with their ease and long-lasting beauty. With more than 500 species and countless cultivars available, there's a veronica to suit every taste. Some have tall, upright spikes of flowers perfect for cutting. Others are low-growing evergreen plants ideal to use as a groundcover with multi-season interest. To me, a garden without veronicas seems somehow incomplete.

The genus name *Veronica* was officially chosen by famed botanist Carl Linnaeus in the 1700s, although some species were already being called "veronica" in England some 200 years before this. The most widely used common name is speedwell, which comes from the archaic for farewell or Godspeed. While many veronicas are beautiful in their natural form, breeding work has contributed improved garden performance and less floppy stems, as well as shades of white, purple and pink to the palette.

The most popular veronicas are grouped by height on the following pages. With so much variety, it's sometimes difficult to comprehend that all these plants belong to the same genus. Fortunately for the gardener, they're all easy to grow and rewarding. Unless noted otherwise, all are hardy to Zone 4.

Blue veronica layered with white lysimachia and acid-yellow rue in a sunny border.

Photo: Howard Rice/Gap



GROUNDCOVERS AND LOW-GROWING MOUNDING FORMS

(under 8 in./20 cm)

Groundcover and low-mounding veronicas include many absolutely fantastic plants. The selections listed are just a tiny glimpse into this diverse genus, but most should be available at good independent garden centres. Some of the most striking blue flowers you'll ever see are found in this group. The groundcover forms listed below are evergreen in all but the coldest areas, except as indicated.

- *Veronica allionii* is a later-blooming species, bearing chubby spikes of deep violet-blue flowers during the summer. Use it along with one of the spring-blooming types to extend your season of colour. Height: 4 to 6 inches (10 to 15 cm); Zone 2.
- V. austriaca 'Ionian Skies' is more of a mounding form than groundcover. It's well suited for rock gardens or walls, or for edging perennial borders. This semi-evergreen bears spikes of soft china-blue flowers in early summer. Height: 6 to 8 inches (15 to 20 cm); Zone 2.
- V. 'Crystal River' is an exceptionally good hybrid, combining the best qualities of its parents, V. liwanensis and V. pectinata. It forms a very low spreading mat of glossy evergreen leaves. Tiny sky-blue flowers smother the plant in mid- to late spring, and appear now and again through the summer. Try this between flagstones or along a path. Height: 1 to 2.7 inches (5 to 7 cm) tall; Zone 3.

Both parents of 'Crystal River' make striking plants in their own right. *V. liwanensis*, a.k.a. Turkish speedwell, can't be beat for drought tolerance. This evergreen groundcover forms a flat mat studded with exceptionally blue flowers in spring. The dense habit also makes it worth considering as a lawn substitute. Height: 2 inches (5 cm); Zone 3.

V. pectinata's carpet of grey-green foliage is studded with tiny, true blue flowers with a white eye. This one is extremely drought tolerant as well, and ideal in rock gardens or as a groundcover in small areas. For a real show of spring colour, try underplanting with dwarf daffodils. Height: 2 inches (5 cm); Zone 3.

■ *V. prostrata* is a popular semi-evergreen selection with several good cultivars now available. They carry very short spikes of flowers in late spring and early summer. Clip plants back after flowering to tidy for summer, if desired. Some of the best ones are Blue Mirror (*V.* 'Blauspiegel'), a German selection noted for its clear blue flowers; 'Goldwell', with its unique goldenedged foliage that contrasts beautifully with violet-blue flowers and is great mass planted or grown in the rock garden; Glacier









- 1 3
- 1. Dainty blooms cover Veronica umbrosa 'Georgia Blue' in spring.
- V. austriaca 'Ionian Skies' makes a good edging plant.
 V. prostrata 'Goldwell' has
- 3. *V. prostrata* 'Goldwell' has gold-edged leaves that light up the plant's violet-blue flowers.

Blue, which stands out with pale blue flowers that smother mounding grey-green foliage; and 'Blue Sheen', whose beautiful white flowers are flushed with blue over glossy foliage. The species and cultivars are four to six inches (10 to 15 cm) tall.

- V. repens is the most compact species.

 The semi-evergreen foliage is adorned with tiny white flowers in spring. Best used for massing as a groundcover over a small area.

 The selection 'Sunshine' adds brightness with golden-yellow foliage. In spring, it's covered with small near-white flowers. Both are wonderful between flagstones, or take advantage of their trailing habit in pots or alpine troughs.

 Height: ½ inch (1 cm).
- V. spicata ssp. incana 'Silbersee' is grown for its silver leaves as well as its deep violet-blue flowers that bloom in June and July. It's excellent for massing as a groundcover, edging a sunny border or combining with dark-leaved plants in containers. Height: 6 to 8 inches (15 to 20 cm); Zone 3.
- V. umbrosa 'Georgia Blue' (syn. V. peduncularis 'Georgia Blue' or 'Oxford Blue') has proven to be an outstanding selection. Small sapphire-blue flowers emerge all over during the spring, and sometimes again in late summer. The evergreen foliage turns bronze-coloured in the colder months. This also looks great with spring bulbs planted underneath. Height: 4 to 6 inches (10 to 15 cm).
- V. 'Waterperry Blue' stands out from the others with a very long bloom period. Named after the Waterperry School of Horticulture in England, where it was discovered, it produces soft blue flowers from late spring into fall. New foliage is often bronzy purple. V. 'Whitewater' is a pure white flowering form and is equally hardy and easy to grow with a similar bloom period. Both are just 1.5 to 2 inches (3 to 5 cm) tall.
- V. whitleyi produces some of the best blue flowers. It forms a mat of distinctly different feathery, olive-green leaves. Tiny sapphire-blue flowers decorate the plant in spring. These will often bloom again in late summer or fall, and it makes an outstanding groundcover.

 Height: 2 to 4 inches (5 to 10 cm); Zone 3.











1. Veronica spicata 'Red Fox' is good for cutting. 2. V. s.'First Lady'. 3. V. s. 'First Love'. Opposite page: Longblooming V. s. 'Royal Candles' is a popular cultivar.

MEDIUM MOUNDING FORMS

(8 to 16 in./20 to 40 cm)

While the low-growing types are generally used as groundcover, many medium varieties make attractive and long-blooming clumps that are useful in the mixed border. Their vertical spikes of flowers function as an exclamation point, standing out from the more common rounded forms. Use them to punctuate your garden. Just remember: If you really want to make a statement, three exclamation points are better than one!!!

- V. 'Aspire' is a new hybrid that promises to be one of the longest-blooming veronicas to date. It's not just another pink veronica, boasts the breeder: 'Aspire' sets itself apart with larger, deep rose flowers on compact, long-lasting spikes. This habit is ideal for both containers and the front of a border. Height: 12 inches (30 cm).
- V. austriaca 'Venice Blue' is another new introduction with the largest flowers in its class. Spikes are short but produced in great numbers, each loaded with true blue flowers in spring for a striking effect. Height: 12 inches (30 cm).
- V. spicata, or spiked speedwell, is perhaps the most popular species. It produces attractive, slender spikes of densely arranged tiny flowers all summer long. Spiked speedwell performs best where soil is evenly moist but very well drained. Breeding is ongoing, and some of the best selections include



'Royal Candles', which is outstanding, bearing short spikes of bright blue flowers that are at home anywhere in the garden. Grow them as an edging plant, in the rock garden or in containers. A light shearing after blooming encourages fresh foliage, and possible repeat flowering in the fall. Height: 8 to 12 inches (20 to 30 cm); Zone 2.

A new series of *V. spicata* is attracting attention, from both growers and, more importantly, consumers. 'First Glory' (blue), 'First Lady' (white) and 'First Love' (pink) look especially great in combination. What really sets these apart is the number of blooms, which continue for weeks. Butterflies love them. All three are 10 to 12 inches (25 to 30 cm) tall.

'Red Fox' is an older cultivar that forms a bushy clump of dark green leaves and bears spikes of deep pink flowers that are excellent for cutting. As with all taller types, these may be pruned hard if they get floppy. Height: 12 to 16 inches (30 to 40 cm).

For an exceptionally vigorous selection, try 'Tickled Pink'. Its bubble gum-pink blooms delight from July to September and are great for cutting. Height: 12 to 16 inches (30 to 40 cm); Zone 5.

One of the most compact V. spicata is 'Baby Doll', with pink flowers on stems just eight to 10 inches (20 to 25 cm) tall. Zone 3.



TALL SELECTIONS

(over 16 in./40 cm)

While much of the breeding work is focused on the demand for medium-sized, long-blooming plants, taller selections are still to be found. Some new cultivars offer colours never before seen in this genus, and as with the medium-sized veronicas, some of the most exciting varieties are crosses.

- V. 'Blue Explosion', 'Purple Explosion' and 'Pink Explosion' are promising hybrids that display unusually dense masses of long, radiating spikes of flowers, offering a bouquet of colour. Height: 16 to 18 inches (40 to 45 cm).
- V. 'Eveline' (syn. V. longifolia 'Eveline') is a hybrid from the Netherlands that shows great promise. This forms a bushy, upright clump of shiny, dark green leaves, bearing vertical wands of deep magenta-purple flowers from July to September; 20 to 24 inches (50 to 60 cm) tall.
- V. longifolia, or long-leaved speedwells, are tall, showy plants, with a few cultivars reaching 48 inches (120 cm) in height. This makes them ideal for larger perennial borders, where they add dependable summer colour. Like other veronicas, these are at their best in a very sunny location in well-drained soil; shade or rich soil can cause the plants to become floppy.

Some exceptional new selections include 'Charlotte', which stands out with green leaves with a narrow white edge and many slender spikes (24 to 30 inches / 60 to 75 cm) of pure white flowers. 'Candied Candle' is a late-blooming variety that shows off its lilac-pink flowers from midsummer to fall. Its 18-inch (45-cm)-tall stems are exceptional for cutting.

- V. 'Purpleicious' is another hybrid that stands out. This award-winning selection has intense purple flowers on compact, sturdy stems. It flowers all summer and is especially dramatic when mass planted. Height: 16 to 20 inches (40 to 50 cm); Zone 3.
- V. 'Tranquility' promises lovely violet-blue flower spikes through summer. Height: 32 to 40 inches (80 to 100 cm).

FOR SOURCES, SEE PAGE 61.







- 1. Veronica 'Pink Explosion' is known for its dense flower spikes.
- 2. White-edged foliage echoes the white blooms of *V*. 'Charlotte'.
- 3. Later-blooming *V.* 'Eveline' flowers from July to September.



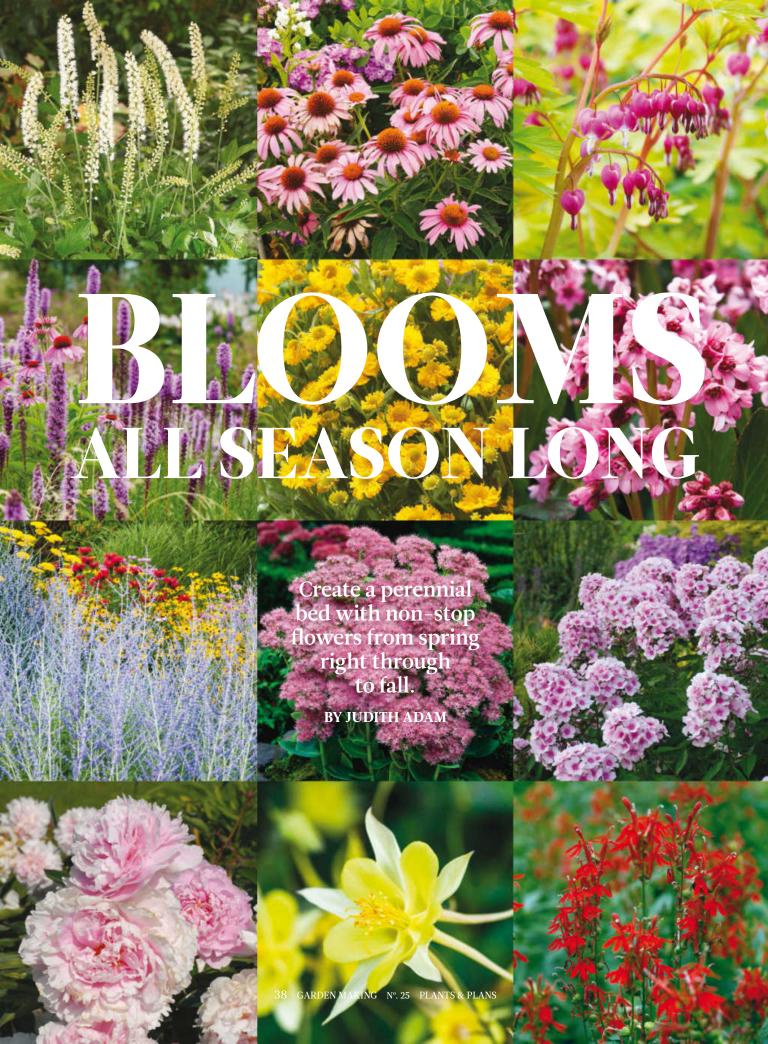


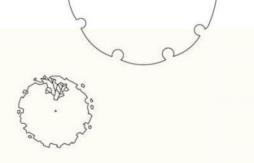


Veronica 'Purpleicious'

Keeping veronicas happy

Caring for veronicas couldn't be easier. Provide a sunny location and well-drained soil. Though undemanding, some taller types may need extra water in periods of extended drought—mulching will decrease the need for this. They are naturally long bloomers, but you can extend it even more by removing flowers or stems as they fade. If you're the tidying sort, feel free to cut back plants after frost, if you prefer. Clumps can be divided every few years in spring or fall to increase vigour. In humid climates, powdery mildew is sometimes a problem; to help reduce its likelihood, provide adequate spacing for plants.





PLAN AVAILABLE ONLINE

You can download a copy of this all-season plan and plant lists at **gardenmaking**. **com/all-season plan**



WHAT DO GARDENERS WANT? The simple answer is to see beautiful blooms every day of the growing season. What we're more likely to see are a few bursts of colourful blossoms interspersed with increasingly long periods of green leaves. This scenario is the result of planting only what interests us most (or what recently seduced us at the garden centre), instead of following a design plan that brings consistent bloom from spring through summer and into autumn.

FILLING THE GAPS

For many years, my garden produced an impressive display of spring bulbs and early-flowering shrubs like forsythia and lilac, followed by flushes of bloom from peonies and roses. A few hydrangeas and daylilies came on in midsummer, but then there was a long slide into green gaps lasting for several weeks, until the fall leaf colours appeared in trees and shrubs. Basically, the garden offered impressive floral displays for a few brief weeks, interspersed with periods of no flowers at all. The bloom sequences were unreliable, and I couldn't expect to see the garden in bloom for the full growing season. This was disappointing and, at the very least, limited my opportunities for garden parties.

Looking beyond the seductive categories of lilacs, roses, peonies and irises to less familiar families like penstemons, yarrows, monkshood and snakeroots led to expanded periods of bloom in my large perennial bed, and the beginning of a constant bloom strategy. Using a calendar to pinpoint the green weeks with no visible flowers, I filled in the gaps with plants scheduled to bloom in these empty periods. After two growing seasons, there were increasingly extended periods of blossom. Learning about perennials beyond my initial list of favourites, and then planning and planting for timed flower sequences through three seasons brought me closer to the goal of a garden in bloom every day from spring through autumn.

Informed selection in plants for your border and practical maintenance considerations go a long way toward keeping a garden in bloom. The average length of bloom for perennials is three weeks, but some, like summer phlox, stonecrops, catmint and columbines, will bloom for six to eight weeks, providing convenient overlaps from one season to the next. Others, such as several dwarf daylilies, will even be in flower from late spring through frost. Although clumps of perennials acquire drought hardiness as they mature, their ability to produce flowers for extended periods is greatly enhanced by fertilizing in spring, watering weekly and deadheading spent blooms.

MAKING IT FULL

With a time sequence design in hand and a willingness to acquire multiples of new plants (and really, how hard is that?), the next decision is how many plants are required to fill in the weeks when no flowers are in bloom. This is a matter of perception: you may be satisfied with fewer, while others may need more to feel that the bed is in bloom every week of the growing season. Whether you're cautiously conservative or extravagantly enthusiastic, it's possible to make a garden bed that will be in continuous bloom for three seasons.

The perception of fullness is based less on the number of plants in bloom and more on the colour and texture contrasts among the plants that are in flower at the same time—for example, the variegated silver-and-green leaves of lungwort contrasted with the purple foliage of Wine and Roses weigela. Also, if a particular plant, like the lungwort, is known to make a robust spring display, it would be smart to put three together for a burst of colourful flowers and foliage, and repeat groups of the same plant throughout the bed. The repetition of such a high-performance plant adds eye-catching fullness to the bed, and is the keystone plant to combine with other perennials that bloom at the same time. Three different plant varieties placed strategically would produce a sense of fullness even with fewer specimens—and the bed would be in bloom.

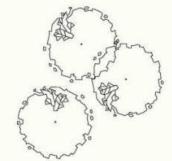
To my eye, three different plants blooming together is the minimum, and you might wish to expand to five or six selections that bloom at the same time. As discussed, some of those could be high performers, and therefore good candidates for repetition. Your justifiable greed for plants will most certainly be rewarded with an increased sequence of bloom and fewer weeks of just green.

YEAR-ROUND INTEREST

Having come this far with making a shopping list and a planting scheme to fill in green periods, it bears mentioning that woody plants are an asset in the perennial bed, providing structure and their own blooming sequence in the master plan. Shrubs will contribute their flowers, and may have purple or variegated foliage, extending their season of interest. Trees and conifers can contribute flowers and ornamental fruit, as well as winter interest.

The garden bed design on the following pages is intended to show perennial plants transitioning in and out of bloom through three seasons. The plan is structured with six perennials and a woody specimen for each season (you could use fewer, still with good results). Factoring in additional overlapping bloom or multi-season foliage from high-performance plants, it's going to be a year of abundant flowers and more than one garden party.

HREE-SEASON PLANTING PLAN



The spring season can be expected to last for 10 weeks, and it makes sense to include early bulbs like crocus, windflowers, narcissus and species tulips to augment the coldest weeks of the season. The first wave of spring blooms begins with 'Excalibur' lungwort, quickly growing into a clump of silverspotted leaves with wands of rosy-purple flowers. (As it's the earliest to rise, it would be worthwhile planting 'Excalibur' in more than one location.)

'Pink Dragon' bergenia will also be stirring early, plumping its fleshy leaves and sending up bold spikes of coral-pink flowers, contrasting with the more delicate lungwort blooms. The Siberian crabapple holds its branches in starkly vertical posture, and covers its branches with sweet, white apple

blossoms (later turning to small, red-flushed yellow fruit).

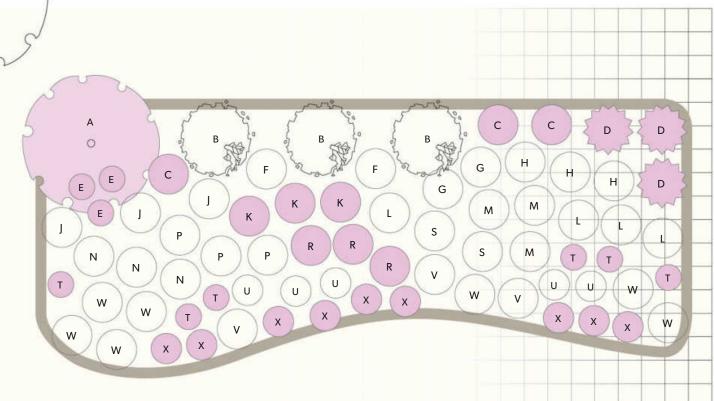
The second phase of spring flowering begins after danger of night frost is past, and includes 'Gold Heart' bleeding heart, which is expanding its chartreuse-yellow foliage and pink lockets, and the spidery amethyst purple flowers of 'Amethyst Dream' perennial cornflower. Finally, the pink 'Sarah Bernhardt' peony is opening perfumed double flowers. The peony's large, lush blooms make a striking contrast against the delicate 'McKana's Improved Giants' columbines, continually in motion like butterflies on the wing.

The silver-spotted foliage of 'Excalibur' lungwort can be cut back after blooming to generate fresh leaves that will last all summer.





'Sarah Bernhardt' peony





1

3

3

3

3

3

6





'Pink Dragonfly' bergenia

SPRING PLANTS

Plants and # used

- A Crabapple
- c Peony
- Cedar
- Columbine
- R Bleeding heart
- R Cornflower
- T Bergenia
- x Lungwort

FEATURE PLAYERS FOR SPRING

- A Columnar Siberian crabapple (*Malus baccata* 'Columnaris'): white flowers with yellow-red fruit, 26 x 6 ft. (8 x 2 m), Zone 4
- c 'Sarah Bernhardt' peony (*Paeonia lactiflora* 'Sarah Bernhardt'): apple blossom-pink, exceptional fragrance, 36 x 36 in. (90 x 90 cm), Zone 3
- D 'Degroot's Spire' pyramidal cedar (*Thuja* occidentalis 'Degroot's Spire'): bright green, slow-growing conifer, 26 x 4 ft. (8 x 1.25 m), Zone 4
- E 'McKana's Improved Giants' columbines (Aquilegia [McKana Group] 'McKana's Improved Giants'): red, pink, blue, yellow bicolours, 30 x 10 in. (75 x 25 cm), Zone 3
- K 'Gold Heart' bleeding heart (*Lamprocapnos* spectabilis 'Gold Heart'): pink-and-white flowers with gold-chartreuse leaves, 24 x 24 in. (60 x 60 cm), Zone 3
- R 'Amethyst Dream' perennial cornflower (*Centaurea montana* 'Amethyst Dream'): amethyst purple, 18 x 18 in. (45 x 45 cm), Zone 4
- T 'Pink Dragonfly' bergenia (*Bergenia* 'Pink Dragonfly'): coral pink, 12 x 16 in. (30 x 40 cm), Zone 4
- x 'Excalibur' lungwort (Pulmonaria 'Excalibur'): rosy-purple flowers, silver-and-green leaves, 8 x 18 in. (20 x 45 cm), Zone 4

THREE-SEASON PLANTING PLAN

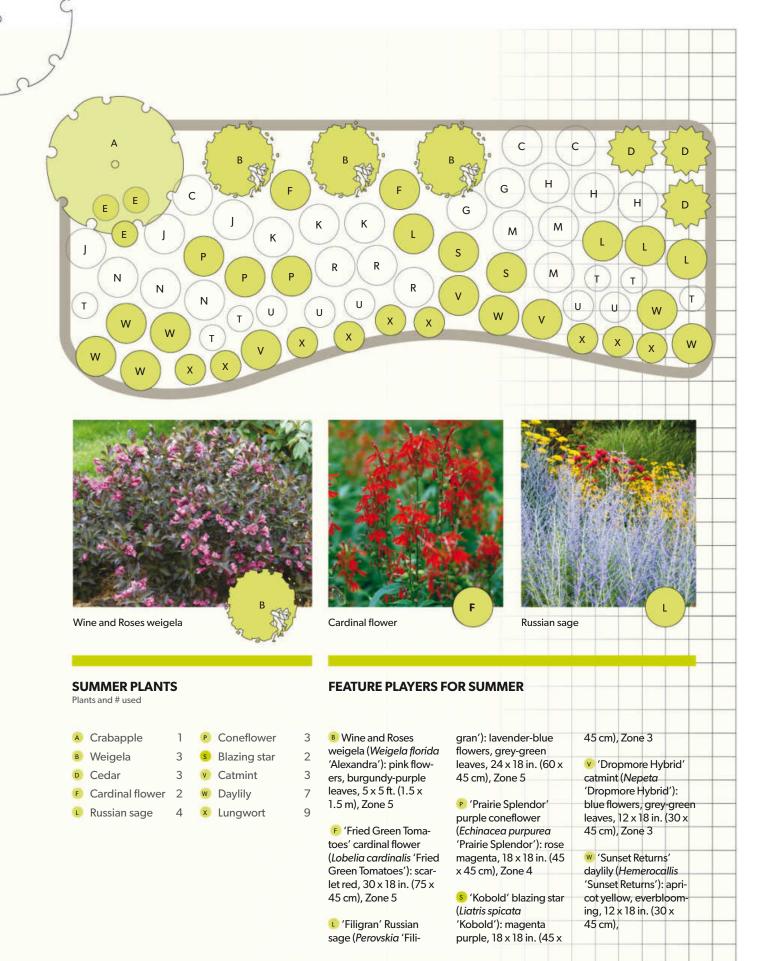
Early to midsummer lasts for about eight weeks, with the beginning marked by the generous production of the clear pink flowers and burgundy-purple foliage of Wine and Roses weigela. The purple leaves are a strong colour asset in the border, and if space allows, using two or three weigelas would be a worthwhile design feature that lasts through autumn. A season-long contrast can be made with the apricot yellow blooms of 'Sunset Returns' dwarf daylily, with these two plants keeping up the happy association right until frost.

Three hot plants for midsummer all have deeply saturated hues in the red to purple range, vividly amplifying the more

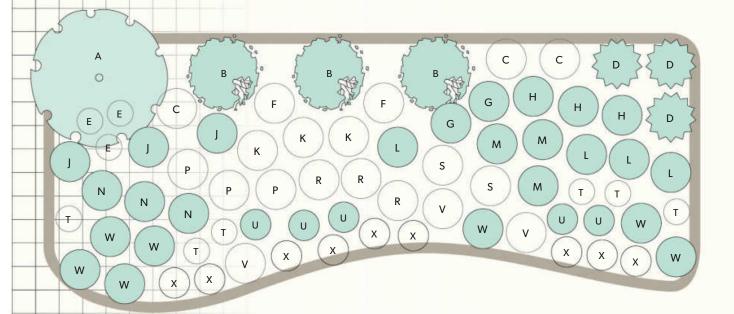
subdued burgundy-purple weigela leaves. Rose-magenta 'Prairie Splendor' coneflower, magenta-purple 'Kobold' blazing star and scarlet-red 'Fried Green Tomatoes' cardinal flower cause the border to nearly throb with red-spectrum heat. This incendiary composition is nicely cooled down and tempered by the bright blue flowers of 'Dropmore Hybrid' catmint and the elegant lavender-blue flower spikes of 'Filigran' Russian sage, both with cooling grey-green foliage. The 'Sunset Returns' daylily and 'Filigran' Russian sage will continue blooming into late summer.







IREE-SEASON PLANTING PLAN



LATE-SUMMER TO AUTUMN PLANTS

Plants used and # used

A Crabapple 3 Weigela 3 D Cedar G Helenium 2 3 **Bugbane** Obedient plant 3 4 Russian sage Phlox 3 N Michaelmas daisy 3 Stonecrop 5 7

FEATURE PLAYERS FOR LATE SUMMER TO AUTUMN

- G 'Double Trouble' helenium (Helenium 'Double Trouble'): double yellow flowers, 30 x 18 in. (75 x 45 cm), Zone 5
- н 'White Pearl' bugbane (Actaea matsumurae 'White Pearl'): white, 36×24 in. $(90 \times 60 \text{ cm})$, Zone 4
- J 'Summer Snow' obedient plant (Physostegia virginian 'Summer Snow'): white, 30×24 in. $(75 \times 60 \text{ cm})$, Zone 3
- M 'Bright Eyes' phlox (Phlox paniculata 'Bright Eyes'): pink with darker pink eye, 24 x 18 in. (60 x 45 cm), Zone 4
- N Peter III Michaelmas daisy (Symphyotrichum novi-belgii Peter III): lavender-blue, 18 x 24 in. (45 x 60 cm), Zone 5
- u 'Brilliant' stonecrop (Sedum spectabile [Brilliant Group] 'Brilliant'): mauve-pink, 18 x 18 in. (45 x 45 cm), Zone 5

Daylily

1

s

The border in late summer has much to offer. The apricot-yellow 'Sunset Returns' daylilies are overlapping into this late phase and will continue for several more weeks, extending the lush feeling of summer. 'Bright Eyes' phlox (light pink with a darker pink eye) is already blooming and will last until early autumn. Also flowering during this time is 'Summer Snow' obedient plant, with its clear white flower spikes making busy punctuation points.

Chrome-yellow 'Double Trouble' fall helenium is in character with the developing hues of red and gold fall tree foliage, and cooled slightly by the broad heads of deep mauve-lavender 'Brilliant' sedum.

Last to bloom in chilled air are the soft lavender-blue Peter III Michaelmas daisy and the honey-scented bottlebrush spikes of cream-coloured autumn bugbane. These two are good partners, and joined with the apricot-yellow daylily, last right up to the first frost. The tall and narrow 'Degroot's Spire' cedars are strong accent plants, providing a dramatic green profile and permanent form into winter.









THE GARDEN BED IN WINTER

Frost might bring a temporary end to the gardener's labour, but the pleasures of a well-planned perennial bed continue on through winter. With a thick layer of snow on the ground, woody plants with ornamental bark, buds and berries have an important role. The vertical form of our Siberian crabapple tree and its red-flushed yellow berries are compelling features. The narrow, compact cedars are dramatic profiles against white snow, and the small thicket of weigela stems provides shelter for

chickadees and finches, and their amusing antics.
The dried blossoms of coneflower and sedum stems
can be left standing to catch intriguing snowcaps.

Bugbane

Architectural objects provide character to the perennial bed in both summer and winter.

A birdbath draws lively attention in the warm months and is a graceful profile in winter.

Free-standing plant supports like an obelisk are perfect for sweet pea and morning glory vines, and make useful focal points in cold months.

With enough plant and architectural features, the perennial bed will continue to hold interest through winter and into the following spring.



Branches of *Picea*pungens 'Glauca

Prostrata' drape over
a mossy boulder.

SMALL CONIFERS, BIG IMPACT

Available in a huge range of textures, shapes and colours, dwarf conifers are nothing short of striking and can make a big impact in any-sized garden.

BY KAREN YORK

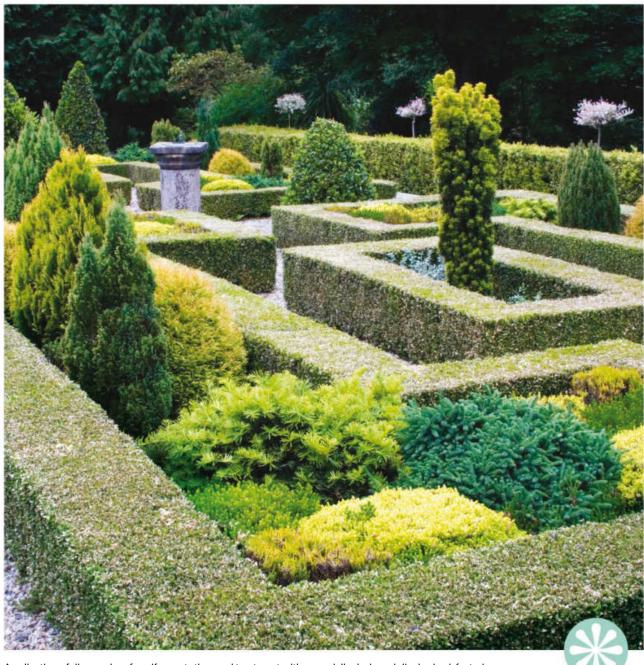
WHEN IT COMES TO CONIFERS, BIGGER ISN'T ALWAYS BETTER. WE MAY PINE FOR MATURE DOUGLAS FIRS AND

Norway spruces, but those goliaths will swallow up most urban gardens. Thankfully, there are dwarf forms of many conifers, suitable for gardens of all sizes, right down to pots and troughs. Of course, "dwarf" is a relative term. The 'Fat Albert' cultivar of blue spruce is often called a dwarf form of Colorado blue spruce, and yes, it is smaller than the 75-foot (22.5-m) species, but it can still reach a pretty hefty 25 feet (7.5 m) or more in time.

The American Conifer Society classifies dwarf conifers as those growing one to six inches (2.5 to 15 cm) a year with a size at 10 years of one to six feet (30 to 180 cm), vertically or horizontally, depending on habit. The key phrase there is "size at 10 years," which is what most labels and catalogues give, too, when describing a plant's height and width. But beware, the *ultimate* height can be considerably more. The lovely dwarf 'Nana Gracilis' Hi-

noki cypress (*Chamaecyparis obtusa* 'Nana Gracilis'), for example, is listed at three feet (90 cm) at 10 years, but can ultimately grow to triple that.

A few dwarf conifers come by their smaller size naturally, but most owe



A collection of diverse dwarf conifers gets the royal treatment with a specially designed display bed featuring clipped boxwood hedging, gravel paths and flowering standards.

their beginnings to quirks of nature. Some are chance seedlings, such as the dwarf Alberta spruce (*Picea glauca* var. *albertiana*) discovered by a railway track in that province in 1904, which are then trialled for garden worthiness. Others start as mutations: when a tree suddenly produces a branch with different growth or colour, which is then snipped off and propagated. Still others spring from "witches'-brooms," the name for congested twiggy erup-

tions on the branches of normal trees. Why these Mini-Me growths arise isn't clear—it could be insects, a fungus or just a genetic anomaly interrupting the growing tips. The story goes that keen plant hunters seeking witches'-brooms, which often occur high up in the trees, would shoot them down rather than risk life and limb climbing up to cut them off.

Many dwarfs in turn produce mutations and witches'-brooms, resulting in ever more tempting additions to plant

collectors' lust lists. As avid "conehead" Robert Obrizok writes of his collecting passion in *A Garden of Conifers*, "Proceed with caution!"

Whatever their origins, dwarf conifers come in a dizzying array of shapes, textures and colours to play with. While many are conical (although that's not why they're called conifers: "conifer" actually means cone-bearing), there are also columnar, oval, spreading, prostrate, mounding, rounded and weep-



ing forms, offering a gamut of creative combinations. Cultivar names such as 'Pixie', 'Teeny' and 'Tom Thumb' are pretty obvious, but the words *nana*, *compacta*, *minima*, *pumilus* and *pygmaeus* are indicators of smaller-than-usual size.

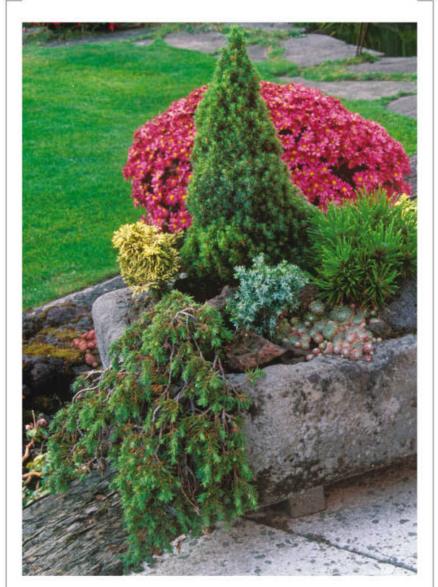
The young foliage of many conifers differs from adult foliage, often being finer in texture and different in hue. Some dwarfs exhibit both simultaneously—Chamaecyparis obtusa 'Split Rock', for example, has blue-toned juvenile growth along with green adult foliage. Some, such as 'Rheingold' white cedar (Thuja occidentalis 'Rheingold'), have ferny, goldenbronze juvenile foliage, only acquiring scaly adult growth with age, while others, such as the little globe cedar T. o. 'Teddy', retain their young foliage even as mature plants.

With textures ranging from soft and feathery to prickly and stiff, dwarf conifers add a distinctive touch to the garden tapestry. And not only with texture, but also with colour. We tend to think of them as just green, but there are also blue, gold, grey-green, chartreuse and multi-hued conifers splashed with or banded in yellow, ivory or white.

Many conifers, in fact, change colours over the course of the year: green 'Rainbow's End' dwarf Alberta spruce, for example, is covered in bright yellow new growth tips—like so many little lights—in midsummer; some, such as the 'Vilmoriniana' Japanese cedar (*Cryptomeria japonica* 'Vilmoriniana'), turn from deep green to russet bronze or burgundy in winter. On top of that are some equally vivid cones, from rich blue-purple on Korean fir (*Abies koreana* cvs.) to startling raspberry red on dwarf Norway spruce (*Picea abies* 'Pusch'), for instance.

A common guideline says one-third of your garden should be composed of evergreens. Given the incredible range of dwarf conifers and the fact that, as with potato chips, it's nigh impossible to have just one, I'm thinking that ratio is sure to go out the window.

FOR SOURCES, SEE PAGE 61.



Troughs and dwarf conifers are meant for each other. Here, an artful arrangement of pines, spruces, junipers and Hinoki cypresses.

CONIFERS IN CONTAINERS

The petite charms of dwarf conifers can be more closely appreciated in containers and troughs. Young specimens can happily coexist in a container for several years before they outgrow it and need to be transplanted into the garden. Even more ideal candidates are the miniature conifers, classified by the American Conifer Society as those growing less than one inch (2.5 cm) a year and attaining a 10-year size of less than one foot (30 cm). These mini-marvels can work on their own or be combined with small perennials and alpine plants. Indeed, the tradition of creating miniature alpine landscapes in troughs is a long and honourable one, and just as popular today.



The rich purple-blue cones on Korean fir (Abies koreana) cultivars look other-worldly.

CARING FOR DWARF CONIFERS

Most conifers like sun; however, hemlocks and yews will tolerate some shade. Those with yellow or variegated foliage may need protection from the hottest sun, though conifer maven Jim Lounsbery of Vineland Nurseries in Beamsville, Ont., cautions that, given too much shade, they may lose their variegation. Dwarf conifers will adapt to most soils and moisture levels, except very sandy and dry. Compost added to the planting area (not just the hole), regular watering and a layer of mulch is appreciated. Lounsbery recommends a fine bark mulch ("Cedar is nice, as it adds some acid to the soil as it breaks down") about two inches (5 cm) deep. Fertilizing isn't necessary, but little conifers in containers, ideally grown in a combination of soil-based mix and sharp sand, should be fed with an all-purpose, slow-release fertilizer at the start of summer.

Harsh winter winds can inflict a lot of damage, so find a sheltered spot for susceptible specimens. Darren Heimbecker of Whistling Gardens in Wilsonville, Ont., also recommends protecting gold and variegated dwarf conifers, if planted in fall, by wrapping them with burlap for the first winter. After that, they should be fine.

Watch for accumulations of dead needles, especially in very compact pines and spruces. Such accumulations can reduce vital air circulation. so should be cleaned out every year or two.

And if a large reverting shoot erupts—as may happen from a grafted plant or a witches'broom-prune it out immediately at the base. Otherwise, the reversion could take over completely and the plant will grow to full, non-dwarf size.

Pruning:

Most dwarf conifers require little pruning, but some do benefit from a snip or shear. For instance, Adrian Bloom recommends pruning Tsuga canadensis 'Gentsch White' regularly to maintain its variegation and Chamaecyparis pisifera 'Squarrosa Intermedia'

to keep its pincushion shape. Lounsbery says winter burn on plants can be trimmed back. and some conifers, such as the 'Rheingold' cedar, can be lightly sheared to retain the juvenile foliage. Also, scale is crucial, so some might need pruning to maintain the balance in a particular arrangement.

Transplanting:

As dwarf conifers grow, albeit slowly, transplanting may be necessary. Early spring is the best time to do this, and for all but the smallest ones, root pruning the previous autumn is recommended, especially for pines. This simply means plunging down a sharp spade around the plant's drip line. This encourages root growth and a tighter root ball, lessening transplant shock. Heimbecker notes that root pruning is also an effective way to restrict growth and keep plants in bound.

Pests and disease:

Dwarf conifers are more prone to pests and disease if stressed—i.e., suffering from drought or waterlogging—so healthy cultivation practices and good air circulation are in order. Keep an eye out for mites and aphids on spruces and

firs; bagworms on false cypresses; twig blight on junipers; and fungal diseases and bark beetles on pines.

Thankfully, deer find many conifers distasteful, except for yews and arborvitae and a few firs. Rabbits nibble indiscriminately, so a low protective fence or individual wire cages may be warranted. I've found meat meal sprinkled on and around small plants to be an effective deterrent, though it must be reapplied regularly. On the plus side, birds adore conifers of all sizes for food and shelter.

DWARF CONIFERS FOR THE LANDSCAPE

Grouped according to form, here is a list of dwarf conifers that offer a wide range of textures, shapes and colours to enhance your garden year-round. Measurements given are approximate 10-year heights or widths, depending on plant form.

Upright

- Dwarf blue Rocky Mountain fir (Abies lasiocarpa 'Glauca Compacta'): Pyramidal form with silver-blue needles; five feet (1.5 m); Zone 5
- 'Confucious' Hinoki cypress (Chamaecyparis obtusa 'Confucious'): Compact gold cultivar; four feet (1.2 m); Zone 5
- 'Nana Lutea' Hinoki cypress (*C. o.* 'Nana Lutea'): Twisted, golden, fan-like foliage; three feet (90 cm); Zone 5
- 'Jean's Dilly' dwarf Alberta spruce (*Picea* glauca 'Jean's Dilly'): Green needles and a tidy conical shape; three feet (90 cm); Zone 4

Irregular

- 'Bandai-sugi' Japanese cedar (*Cryptomeria japonica* 'Bandaisugi'): Deep green needles in congested clusters; five feet (1.5 m); Zone 6
- 'Porcupine' blue spruce (*Picea pungens* 'Porcupine'): Bright blue foliage; three feet (90 cm); Zone 3
- 'Ara-kawa' Japanese white pine (*Pinus* parviflora 'Ara-kawa'): Blue needles and dark, warty bark; three to six feet (90 cm to 1.8 m); Zone 4
- 'Frosty' Canadian hemlock (*Tsuga canadensis* 'Frosty'):

Green needles frosted with white; prefers shade; three feet (90 cm); Zone 4

Round

- 'Snow' Sawara false cypress (*Chamaecyparis pisifera* 'Snow'): Feathery, white-tipped foliage in spring; three feet (90 cm); Zone 5
- 'Vilmoriniana' Japanese cedar (Cryptomeria japonica 'Vilmoriniana'): Finetextured green needles turn bronze purple in winter; three feet (90 cm); Zone 6
- 'Little Gem' Norway spruce (*Picea abies* 'Little Gem'): A ball of soft green needles; two feet (60 cm);
 Zone 3
- 'Pusch' Norway spruce (P. a. 'Pusch'): Covered in bright red cones in spring; three feet (90 cm); Zone 3
- 'Smidtii' Bosnian pine (*Pinus heldreichii* 'Smidtii', syn. *P. leucodermis* 'Smidtii'): Mounding pine perfect for rock gardens; 18 inches (45 cm); Zone 4

Spreading/prostrate

- 'Silver Mist' shore juniper (Juniperus conferta 'Silver Mist'): Silvery blue-green needles; salt-spray tolerant; three feet (90 cm); Zone 6
- 'Mother Lode' creeping juniper (*J. horizontalis* 'Mother Lode'):



Tsuga heterophylla 'Thorsen's Weeping'

Bright golden sport of 'Blue Rug'; six feet (1.8 m); Zone 3

- 'Gold Spot' Siberian cypress (*Microbiota decussata* 'Gold Spot'): Green foliage flecked with gold; three feet (90 cm); Zone 3
- 'Prostrata' blue spruce (*Picea pungens* 'Prostrata'): A true blue creeping form; four feet (1.2 m); Zone 3

Weeping

• 'Farnsburg' Norway spruce (*Picea abies* 'Farnsburg'): Can be staked or left to ramble



Pinus strobus 'Sea Urchin'

over the ground; four feet (1.2 m); Zone 3 • 'Thorsen's Weeping' Western hemlock (Tsuga heterophylla 'Thorsen's Weeping'): A spreader that's staked to form a weeping tree; four feet (1.2 m); Zone 5

Miniatures

- 'Silberperle' Korean fir (Abies koreana 'Silberperle'): Dense upturned needles with silvery undersides; 10 inches (25 cm); Zone 4
- 'Golden Sprite' Hinoki cypress (Chamaecyparis obtusa 'Golden Sprite'): Congested irregular form; holds colour all year; 12 inches (30 cm); Zone 5
- 'Tom Thumb Gold' Oriental spruce (*Picea* orientalis 'Tom Thumb Gold'): Gold-brushed needles, nest-like shape; six inches (15 cm) tall and 12 inches (30 cm) wide; Zone 4
- 'Dave's Choice' mugo pine (*Pinus* mugo 'Dave's Choice'): Little globe-shaped witches'-broom from 'Mops' mugo pine; 12 inches (30 cm); Zone 4
- 'Hagoromo' Japanese white pine (*P. parviflora* 'Hagoromo'): A sweet Japanese white pine; miniature in all respects; 12 inches (30 cm); Zone 5
- 'Sea Urchin' white pine (*Pinus strobus* 'Sea Urchin'): Feathery blue-green foliage on a compact globe; 12 inches (30 cm); 7 one 4

DESIGNING WITH DWARF CONIFERS

Because they're evergreen (or "everblue," "evergold," etc.), conifers add structure, permanence and yearround interest to any garden. One exception is the larch (Larix spp.), which is deciduous and drops all its needles in fall, though it does turn a striking golden tan before doing so. The key is to choose different forms, colours and textures from the extensive conifer palette and combine them for optimal effect.

Darren Heimbecker has been doing just that at Whistling Gardens, his botanical garden and nursery on 20 acres near Brantford, Ont. His collection now features more than 2,500 conifers, including many dwarfs, in a variety of settings. Pressed to name his favourite genera, he says, "The firs, especially the Korean firs, for their colours, soft needles and hardiness: and the Hinoki cypresses, for their beauty and variety, from baseball-sized to really tall trees."

Across the pond, British plantsman Adrian Bloom integrates more than 500 different conifers, large and small, with trees, shrubs, perennials and bulbs in lush, manylayered plantings in his Norfolk garden. The mix is dynamic, with every plant having its time in the spotlight, yet always contributing harmoniously to the whole.

Bloom counts heathers, small barberries, Japanese maples, little spring bulbs, rock and alpine plants, and lowgrowing perennials, particularly ornamental grasses, among the best companions for dwarf conifers. Most strikingly, a wide band of Japanese blood grass (Imperata cylindrica 'Red Baron') winds through the plantings, intensifying a blue spruce here, a golden juniper there. What Bloom calls his "river of blood" cleverly acts as a unifying link and also draws the eye through the space.

On the other hand, New Englander Robert Obrizok, who was instantly hooked by a trio of diminutive conifers, devotes his garden exclusively to them. Groupings are set like jewels in expanses of neutral mulch or gravel, and a wooden boardwalk offers an ideal vantage point from which to admire them.

Stone and evergreens have a natural affinity, from gravel or pebble mulch to carefully placed rocks in deceptively simple arrangements. Sometimes a well-chosen boulder is the best finishing touch. And of course, full-fledged rock gardens are ideal for displaying conifers, which appreciate the good drainage.

Even a dwarf conifer can be showy enough in its own right to be a focal point—the silvery blue dwarf Rocky Mountain fir (Abies lasiocarpa 'Glauca Compacta'), for example, which could be set off by spreading

or mounding green conifers or a royal mix of purple barberries and dusky coral bells.

But be aware, even disciplined gardeners can put plants too close together-it's hard to allow sufficient space for ultimate sizes, especially with very slow-growing plants. One solution is to fill gaps with perennials that can be removed as necessary, though it's important to keep such companion plants in scale. "A medium-sized hosta, for example, would eat a little evergreen for lunch!" says Heimbecker. Further reason to avoid overcrowding is that shaded areas on conifers can result in bald spots, potentially disfiguring the plant. "On most conifers, once it's gone, it's gone," he says.

Upright forms

make strong vertical accents, punctuating a border, accenting a path or framing an entryway. Symmetrical, rigid shapes lend themselves to more formal settings, while the spreading, irregular, windswept forms better suit rockeries and informal spaces. Prostrate and spreading conifers can intermingle to drape over walls, create a ground-covering quilt, or clothe a slope for easy maintenance and effective erosion control

While conifer combinations can be dazzling, multiples of one variety can be used as a mini-hedge, defining or dividing the space and creating continuity. A row of even small conifers can act as a windbreak, producing a microclimate for more diminutive treasures.



'Glauca Globosa' Colorado spruce (Picea pungens 'Glauca Globosa') in a contemporary setting.



BLUEBERRY BONANZA

Both decorative and delicious, highbush blueberries offer homegrown goodness all season long.

BY NIKI JABBOUR

IF YOU'RE LOOKING FOR ME IN AUGUST, THERE'S A GOOD CHANCE YOU'LL FIND ME BESIDE OUR HIGHBUSH blueberry hedge, picking a big bowl of juicy berries. Once relegated to an out-of-the-way spot near the vegetable garden, fruiting perennial shrubs like highbush blueberries are now being recognized for their ornamental value, and being invited to take centre stage in gardens and landscapes.

Highbush blueberries are perhaps the best example of an "edimental," a term coined by Norwegian author Stephen Barstow to describe plants that are both ornamental and edible. They offer four seasons of interest, which begins in spring, when the charming bell-shaped, white to pink blooms unfurl. These are followed in midsummer by the large, deep purple-blue fruit, giving us weeks of sweet-tart berries. With the arrival of autumn, the foliage morphs from green to fiery red, lighting up the landscape for about a month with a brightness that rivals that of burning bush (*Euonymus alatus*). Finally, as the leaves drop and winter closes in, the reddish colour of the new stems becomes visible, as does the peeling bark of the older branches.

Highbush blueberries are related to

Right: Cold-tolerant, disease-resistant 'Bluecrop' is one of the most widely grown blueberries in the world. It bears classic sweet-tart berries in July on highly productive bushes.







Blueberry shrubs have multi-season interest, with dainty white blooms in spring, dusky blue fruit in summer and glowing red foliage in autumn.

other North American native berries, including cranberries, huckleberries and, of course, wild (lowbush) blueberries. However, highbush and half-high varieties, which are a cross between highbush and lowbush blueberries, are bred to be bigger and more productive than their wild ancestors, forming multi-stemmed shrubs that grow from 18 inches to $7^{1/2}$ feet (45 cm to 2.4 m) tall, depending on the variety.

In the home garden, you'll appreciate their good pest and disease resistance, when compared to other types of fruiting trees and shrubs, and their long harvest season, which can be extended even further by growing a mix of early, mid-season and late-producing varieties. And it's not just gardeners who find highbush blueberries to be exceptional garden plants; they're also attractive to native bees, and when the flowers are in full bloom, there's no mistaking the distinct "buzz" coming from the garden.

GROWING

Because highbush blueberry plants can live—and produce—for half a century, or even longer, it's important to start with the right site. Don't be afraid to think outside the vegetable garden; highbush blueberries make excellent hedging or screening plants, but also add interest to shrub and perennial gardens, entranceways and foundation plantings.

Look for a spot with plenty of sunshine, at least six hours per day, and decent, well-drained soil. Blueberries have shallow, fibrous root systems and cannot tolerate wet feet or heavy clay soil. If the soil is poor or not well drained, consider planting in raised beds. Blueberries also need slightly acidic soil, with a pH in the 4.5 to 5.2 range. If you don't know your soil pH, it pays to get a soil test and make any necessary cor-

rections before you plant. Applying elemental sulphur to the soil is the most common way to lower pH, but it's a biological process and will take several months to take effect. If possible, acidify your soil the autumn before you intend to plant.

Early spring is the best time to plant; it gives the shrubs a chance to settle in and start putting out new root growth before the summer heat. Blueberries are shallow-rooted, so there's no need to dig deep. Instead, make the planting hole only slightly deeper than the container they were purchased in, but three times as wide. This gives the roots plenty of room to spread out. Add several inches (8 cm) of compost or leaf mould to the planting hole. Space plants five to six feet (1.5 to 1.8 m) apart, or four feet (1.2 m) apart if you're planting a hedgerow. Space half-high varieties three to four feet (90 cm to 1.2 m) apart.

After planting, water well and protect the shallow root system with a four-inch (10-cm) layer of bark mulch or woodchips. Newly planted shrubs will need a weekly watering if there has been no reliable rain. Next comes the hard part: rub off (remove) any blossoms that

appear that first year; this will send all the energy back to the plant and stimulate vegetative growth. In subsequent years, feed your plants a balanced organic fertilizer, such as 4-4-4, each spring.

Established highbush blueberry plants will yield, on average, about six pounds (3 kg) of berries each summer. To keep the birds from enjoying your homegrown harvest, drape a length of bird netting overtop the bushes, weighing down the bottom so the birds can't sneak beneath.

Blueberries are bothered by few pests, but you should keep an eye out for issues like mummy berry and blueberry maggot. Mummy berry is a common fungal disease that causes fruit to shrivel. Pick off infested fruits when they appear. The fungus overwinters on dropped berries; reduce by removing the mulch and replacing with fresh materials. Blueberry maggot is the most common blueberry pest, but doesn't harm the plant; instead, it affects fruit quality. The adult form is a small fly that lays its eggs in the developing fruit. Once hatched, each berry will have a tiny white worm inside. Not so appetizing! To discourage blueberry maggot, plant dill or cilantro, or place pots of mint near your blueberry shrubs. These will entice parasitic wasps, a major predator of blueberry maggots. As well, certain varieties, like 'Northland', show resistance to blueberry maggot.

PRUNING

Good pruning will encourage healthy plants, high production and large berries. For the first three years, pruning is minimal; remove only dead, damaged or diseased wood. Once the plants are well established, in about year four, the annual haircut can begin. In years four and five, the pruning will be relatively light, but once the plants are six years old, heavier pruning can begin. Expect to remove at least one-third of the wood at each annual pruning. The prime time to prune is late winter or very early spring, when there's no foliage and it's easy to get a sense of the structure of the plant and what should be removed.

A healthy shrub will have six to 12 canes that emerge from the base and support the fruit-bearing branches and shoots. Canes that are three to six years old are the most productive, so your first cuts should remove those that are older than six years. These will be thick at the base and often have lichens growing on the bark. Removing old canes will also open up the plant, allowing more light and air to penetrate the canopy, minimizing the risk of disease.

Once you've cleaned up the old canes, move up to the canopy of the plant with the aim of eliminating weak, twiggy growth. Blueberries are produced on one-year-old wood—the shoots that grow laterally off the branches. You can tell fruit buds from leaf buds by their size and shape: fruit buds are swollen and tear-shaped; leaf buds are small and pointed. Prune out dense, twiggy shoots that only have one or two fruiting buds, leaving lateral shoots that are at least four inches (10 cm) long with a good number of fruiting buds. This will result in larger, better-quality berries.

HARVESTING

I'm not sure who is more impatient for that first harvest: me or the kids. Probably me! But I've learned that you can't rush ripening. Wait until the berries have turned from green to reddish purple to deep blue, and then wait an extra two or three days for the sweetness to fully develop. For unusual varieties like 'Pink Lemonade' (see page 54), a taste test is the quickest indicator of ripeness.

FOR SOURCES, SEE PAGE 61.

5 steps to growing blueberries in containers

Cultivars of dwarf and half-high blueberries adapt well to container culture and can be grown on sunny decks and patios. The fruit adds edible interest, but the foliage is also decorative. As with garden-grown blueberries, you'll need to grow at least two different varieties to ensure good pollination.

- 1. Start with two (or more) big pots (at least 18 in./45 cm in diameter) with drainage holes and fill with bark-based acidic soil.
- 2. Pick compact, dwarf cultivars like 'Jelly Bean' or 'Peach Sorbet'.
- 3. Place the pots in full sun, watering often. A two-inch (5-cm) layer of bark mulch applied to the soil surface helps conserve moisture.
- 4. From spring until midsummer, feed monthly with a half dose of an organic water-soluble, balanced fertilizer, such as 4-4-4. Late feeding can encourage soft growth late in the season, so stop fertilizing by August 1.
- Overwinter by sinking the pots into the ground and mulching with straw or shredded leaves.



'Jelly Bean'

BEST BLUEBERRIES FOR A SEASON-LONG BOUNTY

Certain varieties are described as "self-fruitful," but all highbush blueberries will produce significantly more berries when two or more different varieties are grown. To ensure good pollination, plant them no farther than 100 feet (30 m) apart. Highbush blueberries are hardy in Zones 4 through 7, but 'Northblue' is very cold tolerant and can be grown in Zone 3 with winter protection.

'Patriot' 'Patriot' is among the best of the early-season varieties and has been a garden favourite for 40 years. The compact shrubs grow up to four feet (1.2 m) tall and are cold hardy, reliable and tolerant of various soil conditions. As for the fruit, expect medium- to large-sized berries with a juicy sweetness.

'Bluecrop' In our Zone 6 garden, 'Bluecrop' is a superstar, bearing heavy clusters of mediumsized berries with the classic sweet-tart blueberry flavour. It's considered a mid-season variety, cropping in July, and is one of the most widely grown highbush blueberries in the world. The four- to six-foot (1.2- to 1.8-m)-tall shrubs are disease resistant. cold tolerant and very productive.

'Blueray' This is an early- to mid-season variety that does well in regions with cold winters. The blooms are very attractive, opening pink but maturing to white. The medium-large berries that follow are deep blue and very sweet dessert quality. The plants will grow up to six feet (1.8 m) tall, but

have a slightly spreading form that needs annual pruning to keep it tidy and productive.

'Northblue' This is a called a half-high, which is a cross between highbush and lowbush blueberries. It's ideal for small gardens or container growing, as it only reaches two to three feet (60 to 90 cm) tall. 'Northblue' is very cold tolerant, growing to Zone 3 with protection. The plants aren't large, but the mid-season berries certainly are, growing quarter-sized, with a deep blue colour and sweet flavour.

'Northland' 'Northland' is a great choice for a small garden or a medium-sized hedge. It forms compact four-foot (1.2-m)-tall shrubs with sturdy branches that resist breaking, even under heavy snow load. The medium-sized berries ripen in midsummer and have a flavour similar to that of wild blueberries. It offers some resistance to blueberry maggot.

'Jersey' One of the oldest cultivars, 'Jersey' is still extremely popular. It's also very cold hardy, tolerating temperatures down



'Pink Lemonade



'Bluecrop'



'Peach Sorbet

to -35°C. The plants will grow up to 7½ feet (2.4 m) tall and produce a mid- to late-season crop of small- to medium-sized blueberries.

'Pink Lemonade' Unlike most blueberries, the fruit produced on 'Pink Lemonade' is bright pink, and is packed with sweetness. The plants are also pretty, growing up to five feet (1.5 m) tall and having showy pink flowers in spring. Fruit ripens mid to late

season.

'Peach Sorbet' Growing just 18 to 24 inches (45 to 60 cm) tall, this compact plant is surprisingly productive, yielding a good crop of mid-season large, sweet berries. 'Peach Sorbet' is a true edible ornamental, with attractive peachypink new foliage that matures to a rich green. Plant it as a low edging or in pots.

'Jelly Bean' Ideal for containers, 'Jelly Bean' is a mid-season dwarf blueberry that grows 12 to 24 inches (30 to 60 cm) tall. The fruits are sweet with a flavour often compared to homemade blueberry jelly, and they make a convenient snack on decks and patios.

You asked us

To ask your question, go to gardenmaking.com/ask-a-gardeningquestion/.

I store carrots in slightly dampened peat moss in a cool (15°C) basement. Some of them are rotting. What's causing this?

Bob, Creston, B.C.

Niki Jabbour in Nova Scotia, a savvygardening.com contributor, replies:

"It's not difficult to extend the harvest of homegrown root crops, such as carrots, parsnips and beets, by storing them for weeks or even months, but you need to provide the right conditions. They require cool temperatures (between 1° and 5° C), high humidity and darkness. I leave my root vegetables in the ground in late fall and winter, protecting them with cold frames or deep mulching."

How do I get rid of or prevent the leaf curling pest on Annabelle hydrangeas?

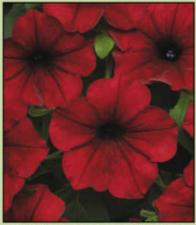
V.J., Cobourg, Ont.

There is a discussion of hydrangea pests on the Toronto Master Gardeners website (torontomastergardeners.ca). The leaf curling could be caused by one of two insects. "The hydrangea leaftier larva binds two or as many as four leaves together with strands of silk into a cup form and then feeds and rests between them," according to the website. Pulling apart the leaves will reveal a half-inch [1-cm]-long slender green caterpillar with a black head. The leafroller also causes similar damage, but rolls only one leaf, then feeds and rests within the rolled leaf.

Both insects cause unsightly damage, but won't harm the shrubs. When you see the damage in early spring, remove the infested leaves and squash the caterpillars. Clean up below the shrubs, because the caterpillars drop to the ground and pupate in the summer and emerge as adult moths the following spring.



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EARLY BLOMERS

Thanks to these enthusiastic flowering shrubs, you don't have to wait until winter is over to enjoy beautiful blooms in the garden.

BY JUDITH ADAM

EAGER GARDENERS ARE ALWAYS INTERESTED IN EXTENDING THE GROWING SEASON. HERE IS A QUARTET OF precocious beauties, all woody shrubs that will burst into flower on bare branches in March, before winter is officially over. For more immediate gratification, budded branches cut in mid-February can be put in a vase and forced indoors. It's never too early to get a jump on spring!

CORNELIAN CHERRY

For a bright start to the season, you can count on Cornelian cherry ($Cornus\,mas$, 16×13 ft. tall $/5\times4$ m wide, Zone 5) to be in full yellow bloom before forsythia. A member of the dogwood family, Cornelian cherry has attractively veined foliage and a full, upright form, and is tolerant of most soils. It's suitable for the back or corner of a shrub border, and its branches can be pruned up to encourage a small tree form, if desired. The lemon-yellow flowers are produced in pompom clusters along the branches and, when fully open, are like a yellow cloud floating in the garden.

Cornelian cherry remains in bloom for three weeks and produces bright red ornamental fruit in summer. When grown in sun, it has more flowers with brighter colour, but it will also make a worthwhile display in part shade.

Golden leaf Cornelian cherry (*C. m.* 'Aurea') has striking gold foliage in June, fading to chartreuse in summer heat. Variegated Cornelian cherry (*C. m.* 'Variegata') has green leaves with irregular creamy-white margins.

FEBRUARY DAPHNE

If pink is your colour choice, the small lilac-purple flowers coating the stems of February daphne ($Daphne\ mezereum$, $5\times5\ \text{ft.}/1.5\times1.5\ m$, Zone 5) will quickly catch your eye, but it's the spicy sweet scent that will knock your socks off. The perfume is similar to hyacinth and is carried on air currents across the garden. If you can place the plant near an entrance, you'll enjoy its perfume every time you open the door.

Despite its name, February daphne blooms in March and is an attractive plant all season, with small green leaves and ornamental red berries (the latter are toxic). Place in a foundation planting or in a perennial bed. There are various white-flowered selections available with the same attractive form, foliage and scented flowers (*D. m.* 'Alba' and double-flowered 'Alba Plena').

February daphne grows best in part shade to full sun and needs well-drained loamy soil enriched with shredded leaves, and consistent moisture. It likes the same conditions as hydrangeas, and will wilt if the soil becomes too dry in summer.



The bright foliage of golden leaf Cornelian cherry (*Cornus mas* 'Aurea') emerges soon after the tree blooms.



The spicy sweet scent of February daphne (*Daphne mezereum*) is as striking as its bright lilac flowers.



Fragrant winter honeysuckle (*Lonicera fragrantissima*) makes an informal privacy hedge. If shrubs grow out of bounds, prune back branches to the ground after flowering; it will rebound quickly.

WINTER HONEYSUCKLE

Another scented plant with great appeal in early March is winter honeysuckle ($Lonicera\ fragrantissima$, $7\times7\ ft./2\times2\ m$, Zone 5), a large, spreading shrub ideal for filling empty corners or making an informal, effective privacy hedge for a cottage or country place. Winter honeysuckle is sometimes known as sweet-breath-of-spring or January jasmine, and these common names hint at the strong perfume of the tissue-thin, pink-tinged white flowers that dangle from woody branches in late winter. The flowers are followed by red berries in June, but they are hidden under the foliage, where birds will find them before you will.

Winter honeysuckle grows in part shade or full sun and requires well-drained soil. If a mature shrub becomes overgrown, it can be drastically pruned—cut branches back to the ground immediately after flowering, and they will renew themselves with fresh growth.

'DAWN' VIBURNUM

There are several deeply scented viburnums for spring, and the earliest blooming is $Viburnum \times bodnantense$ 'Dawn' ($10 \times 10 \text{ ft.}/3 \times 3 \text{ m}$, Zone 6), named for the Bodnant Gardens in Wales. 'Dawn' has an old-fashioned vase form similar to that of beautybush ($Kolkwitzia\ amabilis$), and goes through winter with tight flower buds exposed to the elements. In February, the flowers swell, opening about the middle of March into sweetly scented cymes (dangling clusters) of pink-tinged white flowers. Red berries form among deep green, pointed leaves that are quickly relished by cardinals and other small birds. 'Dawn' is a gangly, upright shrub with arching branches, suitable for the corner of a house or a large space in the shrub border.

Resistant to the viburnum beetle that ravages others in the viburnum family, it performs equally well in light shade to full sun, in well-drained, consistently moist soil—a sunny location will help develop burnished mahogany-coloured autumn foliage.



GROWING TIPS

If you start with small, young plants, they will show you some juvenile flowers; expect greater flowering within three years after root development. Each shrub performs well in part shade, but more sunlight will increase the number of blooms. Water them through summer to encourage healthy new wood that carries the flowers for next season; give them a generous mulch of leaves in autumn. If pruning is necessary, be sure to do it immediately after the shrubs finish blooming and before new wood (carrying flower buds) is produced.

Sources



Your guide to seeds and plants featured in this issue

SIMPLY IRRESISTIBLE

Heather Farm; B.C.; theheatherfarm.com Palatine Fruit and Roses; Ont.; 905-468-8627; palatineroses.com

HIT PARADE

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The new plants listed were suggested by the following companies:

PERENNIALS

'Pocahontas' anemone: Lost Horizons, Ont; 519-853-3085; losthorizons.ca

Mighty Chocolate Cherry astilbe: Plant Paradise Country Gardens, Ont.; 905-880-9090; plantparadisecountrygardens.ca

'Pixie Periwinkle' false indigo: Lost Horizons

Iridescent Bells bellflower: Heritage Perennials, Ont. and B.C.; perennials.com

'Rainbow Marcella' coneflower: Heritage Perennials

Jolly Jewel Series cranesbills: Phoenix Perennials and Specialty Plants, B.C.; 604-270-4133; phoenixperennials.com

'Angel Falls' hosta: Gardens Plus, Ont.; 705-742-5918; gardensplus.ca

'Beyond Glory' hosta: Gardens Plus

'White Gold' bleeding heart: Phoenix Perennials 'Real Charmer' Shasta daisy: Heritage Perennials

'King Kong' ligularia: Phoenix Perennials

'Little Angel' burnet: Lost Horizons

'Lime Twister' sedum: Heritage Perennials

SHRUBS & TREES

'Ruby Slippers' Amur maple: Greenspot Nursery; Man.; 204-727-5884; greenspotbrandon. com

'Purple Ghost' Japanese maple: Blomidon: N.S.; 855-542-1999; blomidonnurseries.

'Orchid Annie' butterfly bush: Plant Paradise Country Gardens

'Snow Tower' flowering dogwood: Whistling Gardens; Ont.; 519-443-5773; whistlinggardens.ca

'Red Dragon' corkscrew hazel: Vineland Nurseries; Ont.; 905-562-4836; vinelandnurseries.com

Yuki Cherry Blossom deutzia: Blomidon 'Ena Nishiki' variegated disanthus: Whistling Gardens

'Mariken' dwarf gingko: Rideau Woodland Ramble; Ont.; 613-258-3797; rideauwoodlandramble.com Miss Saori hydrangea: Phoenix Perennials Royal Mist Rosybloom crabapple: Jeffries Nurseries; Man.; 204-857-5288; jeffriesnurseries.com

Bylands dwarf blue spruce: Greenspot Nursery

Klondike Amur cherry: Jeffries Nurseries

'Joe Kozey' Japanese umbrella pine: Vineland Nurseries

ROSES

Oscar Peterson: J.C. Bakker & Sons; Ont.; 877-816-6608; jcbakker.com

Honeymoon: Palatine Fruit and Roses; Ont.; 905-468-8627; palatineroses.com

ANNUALS

Monarch Promise milkweed: Hort Couture Plants; hortcoutureplants. com

Campfire Fireburst bidens: Proven Winners; provenwinners.com

Superbells Holy Moly calibrachoa: Proven Winners

'Black & Bloom' salvia: Ball Flora Plant; ballfloraplant.com

THE GOOD SEED

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Anything Grows, Ont.; 519-949-1200; anythinggrows.com

William Dam Seeds, Ont.; 905-628-6641; damseeds.ca Florabunda Seeds, Ont.; 705-295-6440; florabundaseeds.com

Halifax Seed, N.S.; 902-454-7456; halifaxseed.ca

Stokes Seeds, Ontario; 800-396-9238; stokeseeds.com

Urban Harvest, Ont.; 416-504-1653; uharvest.ca

Vesey's, P.E.I.; 800-363-7333; veseys.com

West Coast Seeds, B.C.; 604-952-8820; westcoastseeds.com

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Vineland Nurseries, Ont.; 905-562-4836; vinelandnurseries.com

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BLUEBERRY BONANZA

PAGE 52

Botanus, B.C.; 800-672-3413; botanus.com

Cornhill Nursery, N.B.; 506-756-3635; cornhillnursery.com

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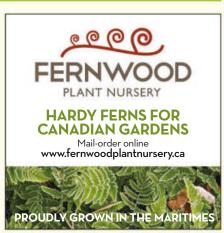
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From jade to mint to emerald, green flowers surprise us with variations on nature's primary colour.

BY KAREN YORK

Go green with spires of bells of Ireland (left) and shaggy Green Trick sweet William. "GREEN FLOWERS" may seem like an oxymoron, along with "dwarf giant sequoia" and "winter interest." But there are indeed green flowers, whose charms are of the subtler variety: not for them the flashy hedonism of scarlet poppies or hot pink peonies. Rather, the likes of green hellebores bow their heads demurely in spring, while little hacquetia (*Hacquetia epipactis*) modestly cloaks the ground in shady woodlands. Slightly bolder is the frilly jade-green primrose 'Francisca', discovered by the late Canadian plantswoman Francisca Darts of Surrey, B.C.

Later come the verdant spires of bells of Ireland (Moluccella laevis), an annual that may echo shamrocks' colour, but is actually native to Turkey and Syria. It's beloved by florists, whose go-to greens also include cute-as-abutton mums such as 'Froggy' and 'Kermit', elegant spider mums such as 'Shamrock' and 'Anastasia Green', and a startling form of sweet William (Dianthus barbatus) that resembles an exploding ball of moss.

Many so-called green blooms lean more to

chartreuse—the delicate tubular bells of Langsdorff tobacco (*Nicotiana langsdorffii*), for instance. Zippier than true green, chartreuse acts as a fine garden peacemaker between more strident hues.

Usually flowers are flamboyantly coloured to attract pollinators, so what about green flowers? Well, the botanist in me must confess that what we view as the petals of many green flowers aren't truly petals. Hellebores have five sepals resembling petals, enclosing a ring of little nectaries that are actually modified petals. Got that? And hacquetia's emerald blooms are really bracts, again surrounding the tiny, yellow true flowers (as with poinsettias). Both provide vital sustenance to early emerging insects, which pollinate them in the process. Further, bells of Ireland's stunning "bells" are in fact leaves, clasping the stem and almost hiding little white flowers in their throats.

But the contrarian in me, enamoured of their contradictory charms, says fie—I'm calling them flowers and that's that!

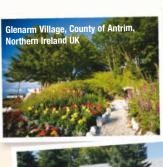


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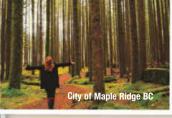
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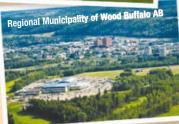


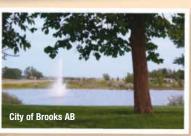




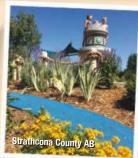












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